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ABSTRACT

The first of two follow-up studies, involving 53 infant teachers in England and Wales, was conducted to monitor changes in the workloads of teachers as the national curriculum and assessment were brought in following ministerial promises to reduce the burdens imposed on teachers by the implementation of the national curriculum. Data were collected by questionnaire and time sheets on teachers' use of time, and by interviews with a subsample of the teachers to obtain their perceptions of and feelings about the impact of the Education Reform Act of 1988 on their working lives. The study gathered data on: time on work overall and by subcategories, differences between Year 2 teachers and others, and time spent on different activities. Interviews focused on attitudes toward the national curriculum, workloads, pressure in the school day, and the reduction of pleasure in teaching. The study showed that: (1) 72 percent of the teachers thought that the time they were spending on work in 1991 was more than in 1990; (2) lack of time was the most serious obstacle to teachers' implementation of the national curriculum and assessment; (3) teachers thought it was reasonable for them to work about 8 extra hours per week, but they were working about 22 extra hours per week; and (4) teachers' overload was not restricted to the period in which the national assessments were administered, but was typical of other time periods as well. Policy issues raised by the research findings are discussed. (JDD)

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 In May 1990 we reported our pilot study of the use of teachers' time in Key Stage 1. The study showed infant teachers working on average nearly 50 hours, and some over 70 hours, per week in Spring term 1990. The sample comprised 95 teachers in 54 LEAs in England and Wales, who kept a daily log of the time spent on work for 14 consecutive days and completed a questionnaire. The report of this research was published by AMMA as **1330 Days**.

1.2 We were commissioned by AMMA to undertake two follow-up studies, of the same teachers, in Spring term 1991, ie. a year later. The first of these studies was a re-run of the **1330 Days** research and the data were collected within a three-week period after half-term. The main purpose was to monitor changes in the workloads of infant teachers as the national curriculum and assessment were brought in, and following ministerial promises last year to reduce the burdens imposed on teachers by the implementation of the national curriculum. Key Stage 1 teachers have been the first teachers to implement the statutory orders in Mathematics, Science, English and Technology for a whole Key Stage, and the first to experience assessment and recording arrangements defined in statutory orders. The evidence from our study of the amount of time the teachers were spending on work in Spring term 1991 comprises Part I of this report.

1.3 The data were collected by questionnaire and time sheets called the 'Record of Teacher Time' (Appendix 1). The data on the latter enabled us to analyse the time spent on work over 7 consecutive days for each teacher, from 7 am. to midnight. These time data were analysed in five basic ways:

1. Total Time spent on Work Overall.

2. Time spent on main sub-categories, viz. Teaching, Preparation, Administration, In-service, and Other Activities.

3. Within each main sub-category, time spent on further sub-divisions. These are shown in the coding system overleaf.

4. Time spent in 1, 2 and 3 above, at week-ends week days, and all days, ie. week-ends and week days combined.

5. Time spent in 1, 2 and 3 above, on school premises and off school premises, the latter mainly at home. This distinction approximates to the difference between directed and non-directed time.

1.4 The sample, sub-sample, numbers of teachers and days of work in each of the AMMA-commissioned studies are provided in Table 1.1 in Part 1. In addition, we are conducting another study of teachers' time, not sponsored by AMMA, and the Spring term returns in this study gave us a basis for comparing the figures in the AMMA study with a non-AMMA sample. This comparison is shown in Table 1.1 in Part 1.

1.5 We also undertook to interview a 1 in 4 sub-sample of the teachers to obtain their perceptions of, and feelings about, the impact of the Education Reform Act 1988, particularly the national curriculum and assessment, upon their working lives. They discussed with us their views on their workloads, the national curriculum, their morale and job satisfaction, working conditions, and the ways in which their work was affecting their personal lives. The evidence from this interview study comprises Part II of this report.

1.6 Keith Halstead, Deputy Director of Warwick University's Computing Services Unit, wrote the program for analysing the time data and advised us on its operation. We gratefully acknowledge his expertise.

CODES FOR THE RECORD OF TEACHER TIME (P)

1. TEACHING

Include activities where you are in direct contact with children, helping them to learn. There are five codes:

- **TM** Teaching Mathematics and Number
- **TE** Teaching English, Language, Reading, Talking, Listening
- **TS** Teaching Science
- **TO** Teaching other subjects
- **TA** Assessment and/or recording for the National Curriculum carried out during teaching.

Do not try to go into great detail. If there is any Mathematics going on in a given teaching session, simply enter TM. Some sessions could have all five codes entered.

2. PREPARATION/MARKING

Include activities in which you prepare or mark children's work but are not in direct contact with them. There are three codes:

- **PR** Preparing and planning for children's learning, writing lesson plans, forecasts, schemes of work, organising the classroom and resources in it, briefing classroom assistants, parent helpers, etc.
- **PM** Marking children's work, writing comments on it, recording results
- **PO** Organising or collecting resources, organising visits/trips.

3. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Include formal and informal activities intended to help in your professional development, such as training days, all courses (including those leading to a further qualification), conferences and workshops. There are five codes:

- **IN** Organised courses, conferences, etc., but not non-pupil days.
- **IT** Travel to organised courses, conferences, etc.
- **ID** Non-pupil days
- **IS** Staff meetings, informal consultation with colleagues, advisers, advisory teachers
- **IR** Reading of professional magazines, journals, National Curriculum documentation and other sources of information.

4. ADMINISTRATION

Include activities concerned with the routines of school work. There are nine codes:

- **AP** Discussion/consultation with parents
- **AD** Mounting displays
- **AS** Supervising children before the school day begins, at break/lunch, end of school day, etc.
- **AL** Liaison meetings/activities with teachers in other stages, other schools, etc.
- **AW** Attending/participating in assembly/act of worship
- **AB** Lunch, coffee/tea breaks - free of work
- **AF** Lunch, coffee/tea breaks - which were not free of work
- **///** Registration and collecting dinner money, and/or moving children from one location to another (eg. from class to hall, playground to class, school to swimming baths), tidying up, etc. (The code for this is simply to fill diagonal lines in the time space, thus //////, since these are sometimes short time spaces).
- **AN** Non-contact time which is free of work; otherwise enter appropriate code.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES

- **OG** Attendance at meetings of governing bodies.
- **OA** Activities that you cannot easily allocate to one of the other codes, eg., filling in this record, dealing with lengthy interruptions, and other things.
- **OS** Work with sports teams, drama productions, orchestras, clubs and all educational visits etc. outside timetabled lessons.

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PART 1

TIME SPENT ON WORK BY KEY STAGE 1 TEACHERS IN SPRING TERM 1991

TIME ON WORK OVERALL AND MAIN SUB-CATEGORIES

1.1 The summary data from our three samples of teachers are provided in Table 1.1. The second column (Sample 1a [in bold]) shows the time spent on work by the teachers in the re-run exercise referred to in paragraph 1.2 of the Introduction, viz. the main focus of the present study. These 53 teachers are a sub-sample of Sample 1). The figures are in minutes per day and need to be multiplied by 7 to obtain the weekly mean.

Table 1.1 **Mean minutes daily on work overall, and on main sub-categories of work from three samples of teachers**

SAMPLE	1 Spring 1990	**1a Spring 1991**	2 Spring 1991
No. of teachers	95	**53**	33
No. of working days	1330	**371**	231
On work overall	425	**468**	452
Teaching	149	**154**	160
Preparation	132	**136**	117
Administration	124	**125**	128
In-service	77	**76**	47
Other	26	**35**	47

Note: The total on work overall is smaller than the sum of the main sub-categories because teachers sometimes carried out two activities simultaneously, (eg. planning lessons (Preparation) during break (Administration)).

1.2 Five important general findings emerge from the overall figures in Table 1.1. First, there is a substantial increase, about 43 minutes a day, or 5 hours per week, in the amount of time overall the teachers in the re-run exercise spent on work, in Spring 1991, over the time spent by all teachers in Spring 1990.

1.3 Second, the other 1991 sample (Sample 2), unconnected with the AMMA research, revealed overall time substantially higher than Sample 1, and fairly close to the figures for the re-run exercise teachers (Sample 1a). This gives us some confidence that the time on work overall recorded by the Key Stage 1 teachers in 1991 is a real change.

1.4 Third, in 1990 the average time spent on work by the 1330 days teachers (Sample 1) was equivalent to 49.6 hours per week. The figure for the sample involved in the re-run (Sample 1a) a year later, is 54.6 hours per week. One way of thinking about this overall figure is to imagine (unrealistically) that teachers worked a 5-day week, ie. they did no work at the week-end. On this basis, the teachers in Sample 1a were working the equivalent of almost an 11-hour working day on average.

1.5 Fourth, the increase is in work overall, with relatively small or nil increases in the sub-categories. This means that there has been a reduction in the amount of time when teachers have been engaged in two sub-categories of activity simultaneously (eg. Preparing and Teaching). Their work has become more focused on single sub-categories. This would make sense as a response to a more pressurised working day - a view that accords with the interview evidence. The relatively small increases in the sub-categories mask some substantial increases in the sub-divisions within them, such as increases in time on Marking/Recording results within Preparation overall. These are discussed below in Paragraph 1.16 ff. It is worth noting that all but one of the main sub-categories showed increases.

1.6 Fifth, the proportion of time spent Teaching compared with time on work overall is of considerable interest. The proportion is 33% Teaching - the comparable proportion in 1990 was 35.1%. It should be emphasised that the absolute amount of time spent teaching has not been reduced; the reduction is in Teaching as a proportion of time spent on work overall. If the time spent on supervision, registration and attending assembly

(5.1 hours per week) is added to the time spent Teaching, the proportion of time spent Teaching in this wider sense rises to 41.6% (43.9% in 1990). It may come as a surprise to the general public that nearly 60% of these infant teachers' working time was spent away from children, but the explanation is the relatively large amounts of time they were spending on Preparation and In-service. Table 1.1a shows the relative proportions of each category as a percentage of Total Time on Work.

Table 1.1a **Proportions of time on each main sub-category of activity, expressed as a percentage of total time on work**

	1990 %	1991 %
Teaching	35	33
Preparation	31	29
Administration	29	27
In-service	18	16
Other Activities	6	7
Time overall	100	100

Note that the sum of sub-categories is greater than 100%, since activities in two or more sub-categories can be carried out simultaneously.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YEAR 2 TEACHERS AND OTHERS

1.7 Table 1.1 shows the general picture of time spent on work. However, within the sample, a significant difference emerged that we regard as a very important finding. Our sample of 53 teachers comprised 26 with Year 2 children in their classes and 27 without Year 2 children. Year 2 children are those for whom teachers in Spring term 1991 were required to assess, using their own assessment (Teacher Assessment) of the children whilst teaching them, and to record assessment in a summary form before they were "tested" using SATs in the Summer term 1991. This item was not included on the questionnaire in the 1990 study so that direct comparison across the two years was not possible.

However, we predicted that teachers with Year 2 children would have to work longer hours than other Key Stage 1 teachers because of the statutory requirements on assessment and the widely reported pressure on them to develop assessment and recording techniques. Appendix 2 shows the overall

distribution of time by all teachers, and by Year 2 and non-Year 2 teachers separately. The range is substantial but Year 2 teachers had substantially more time and higher minimum and maximum times. The data that follow focus on the main differences between the two groups. Table 1.2 provides the relevant data for work overall, and on Preparation and In-service combined.

Table 1.2 **Mean daily time on work, in minutes, by teachers with Year 2 children, and teachers without Year 2 children in class**

	With Year 2 n = 26	Without Year 2 n = 27	Statistical Significance Level
Time on work overall	498	438	<.005
Time on work (week days)	601	562	<.05
Time on work (at school)	359	355	n.s.
Time on work (off school premises)	137	82	<.002
Time on Preparation and In-service (week days)	253	184	<.002
Time on Preparation and In-service (week-ends)	172	103	<.05
Time on Preparation and In-Service (at school)	111	94	n.s.
Time on Preparation and In-service (off school premises)	119	67	<.002

1.8 The figures in Table 1.2 show that our prediction about Year 2 teachers was confirmed. They spent more time on work overall, on Preparation/In-service during the week, and especially Preparation/In-service off school premises. The statistical significance levels for these three are very high. Apart from the special pressure that teachers of Year 2 children were under as a consequence of the end of Key Stage core subject teaching, assessment and recording, they had similar working conditions (class size, non-contact time, etc.) to the other teachers. Table 1.2 shows that the non-Year 2 teachers were working overall slightly longer hours than the 1990 sample (51.1 hours per week). But the increase since 1990 was carried mainly by the Year 2 teachers, who were working for 58.1 hours. Thus, the average extra workload for Year 2 teachers, compared to other teachers, was about 7 hours per week. Assuming (again unrealistically) a 5-day week, Year 2 teachers were working an 11¼ hour day. The top 20% of Year 2 teachers were working nearly 68 hours a week. The top 20% of non-Year 2 teachers

were working 59 hours a week (see Appendix 2). We think the great differences in working time are attributable to the particular demands of the core curriculum, assessment and recording.

1.9 We have evidence from the detailed analysis that provides further support for the above explanation. If Year 2 teachers are working longer hours than other Key Stage 1 teachers because of the pressure on them to deliver, assess and record the core subjects of the national curriculum, we would expect them to be spending more time than other teachers on Planning and Marking/Recording and Organising classrooms and learning materials (ie. the sub-divisions of Preparation); on Reading national curriculum documents and other documents (one of the sub-divisions of In-service) and on Assessment whilst teaching (one of the sub-divisions of Teaching). We also predicted that Year 2 teachers would engage in more Preparation overall during week days because of the intense pressure they were under; more Marking/Recording, especially at home, because there was no time to do the extra recording at school; more Organisation of classrooms/learning materials at school, because of the need to organise classrooms differently with an eye to assessing pupils. Tables 1.3 to 1.5 provide details about the evidence related to our predictions.

Table 1.3 **Mean daily minutes on aspects of In-service by teachers with and without Year 2 children in class**

	With Year 2	Without Year 2	Statistical Significance Level
All In-service (all days)	100	53	<.005
" " (week days)	109	61	<.005
" " (week-ends)	81	31	<.05
" " (in school)	38	27	n.s.
" " (out of school)	62	26	<.01
All Courses, Travel, Baker Days (all days)	38	20	n.s.
All other Training (all days)	25	10	<.05
" " (week days)	27	11	<.05
" " (week-ends)	22	10	n.s.
All Meetings (all days)	29	20	n.s.
All Reading (all days)	35	14	<.05
" " (week days)	29	14	<.05
" " (week-ends)	48	15	n.s.
" " (out of school)	29	11	<.05

1.10 Table 1.3 shows substantial differences in the amount of time spent on In-service by Year 2 teachers and others. The statistically significant differences are systematically in the same direction and those relating to the main sub-category are very high. Year 2 teachers spent significantly more time on all In-service activities combined, whether across the week as a whole or on week days only, or at week-ends. This is particularly true of time on In-service away from school premises. They spent more time on In-service training, especially during the week days. As might be expected, reading national curriculum documents and other documents and journals also took more time for Year 2 teachers, presumably because they needed to consult such documents for planning and assessment more regularly and more intensively than other teachers. The explanation is supported by the fact that Year 2 teachers spent more time reading such documents at week-ends and out of school. It is also supported by the interview evidence in Part 2 of this study, where teachers reported the need to resort constantly to the national curriculum orders and all the paperwork associated with assessment and recording. An alternative explanation (since the code IR, for Reading, also includes reading professional magazines, journals, etc.) is that Year 2 teachers spent much of their time away from school reading the advertisements in the Times Educational Supplement for teaching posts that did not involve Year 2 children.

Table 1.4 **Mean daily minutes on aspects of Preparation by teachers with or without Year 2 children in class**

	With Year 2	Without Year 2	Statistical Significance Level
All Preparation (all days)	153	120	<.05
All Preparation (week days)	168	137	n.s.
All Preparation (week-ends)	107	77	n.s.
All Preparation at home	68	47	<.05
All Marking/Recording (all days)	76	35	<.005
All Planning (all days)	101	94	n.s.
All Organising classrooms/ Materials (all days)	26	16	n.s.
Marking/Recording (week days)	81	40	<.05
Organising classrooms/ Materials (week days)	32	17	n.s.
Organising classrooms/ Materials (in school)	20	9	<.05
Marking/Recording (out of school)	46	13	<.001

1.11 Table 1.4 shows Year 2 teachers spending significantly more time on Preparation overall (though not as we expected, on lesson planning), especially at home. The most important finding here is the highly significant differences between Year 2 and other teachers in respect of the amount of time spent on Marking/Recording of pupils' work. Year 2 teachers spent much more time on this activity than others, whether considered overall, during the week or away from school. We assume that the explanation for this is that the Year 2 teachers were spending time on assessment and recording children's work against the attainment targets and levels. This explanation is supported by the interview data where teachers reported spending enormous amounts of time on recording and filling in record sheets.

1.12 The finding that Year 2 teachers spent more time organising their classrooms and learning materials in school during the week makes sense also, since they would be expected to organise materials and classrooms for national curriculum activities relating to teacher assessment more often than other teachers.

1.13 The finding that Year 2 teachers did not spend significantly more time on lesson planning is not in line with our prediction. However, the finding is supported by the interview data where the teachers reported that their planning had been helped by the national curriculum documents and that all teachers, not just Year 2 teachers, were planning lessons in this way.

1.14 It is worth noting the stark fact that Year 2 teachers were spending <u>8.9 hours per week on Marking/Recording results</u>, 5.4 hours of which were spent off school premises. This time was almost certainly spent on assessing/recording for the national curriculum. The comparable figures for non-Year 2 teachers were 4.2 hours and 1.6 hours respectively. This suggests that the extra burden upon Year 2 teachers of assessing/recording the national curriculum alone, (ie. ignoring other aspects of Preparation and In-service training) is just under 5 hours per week. These figures underestimate the burden since some teachers recorded Teacher Assessment in our category "Assessing While Teaching".

Table 1.5 **Mean daily minutes on aspects of Teaching with or without Year 2 children in class on week days**

	With Year 2	Without Year 2	Statistical Significance Level
All Teaching	212	214	n.s.
Assessing whilst teaching	66	39	n.s.(<.06)
Teaching Mathematics	104	98	n.s.
Teaching English	142	161	n.s.
Teaching Science	77	68	n.s.
Teaching Other Subjects	102	109	n.s.

1.15 Table 1.5 shows that the overall time spent teaching and the patterning of time on the curriculum by the two groups of teachers were not significantly different. The total time spent teaching was almost identical for the two groups and, apart from time spent on English and on Assessing Whilst Teaching, time spent on curriculum subjects was very similar. The higher figure for English for non-Year 2 teachers presumably reflects the greater time given to Language and Reading activities in Reception and Year 1 classes. The longer time on Assessing Whilst Teaching in Year 2, though not quite reaching statistical significance, probably reflects the special demands on Year 2 teachers as they finalised assessment activities for the national curriculum by Teacher Assessment (TA). If we combine the time spent on Assessment Whilst Teaching with that on Marking/Recording the Year 2 teachers spent some 14.3 hours per week on Assessment and Recording activities

TIME SPENT ON DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES BY THE WHOLE SAMPLE

1.16 Having explored the major differences between the Year 2 teachers and others, we turn to the time spent on work by the whole sample in the five main sub-categories (Teaching, Preparation, Administration, In-service and Other Activities) and the subdivisions within each.

1.17 Table 1.1 (Paragraph 1.1) showed that, on average, the teachers spent 154 minutes per day on Teaching. This was the mean for 7 days which, although allowing comparisons with other categories, is not entirely appropriate as the basis for analysing teaching, since teaching occurred on the five week days only. Table 1.6 provides the data presented

for 5 days only - this excludes some activities which teachers scored as Assessment in evenings or at week-ends.

Table 1.6 **Mean time in minutes spent Teaching per week day**

Teaching overall	212
Teaching English	151
Teaching Mathematics	101
Teaching Science	72
Teaching Other Subjects	105
Assessment Whilst Teaching	51

1.18 It can be seen from Table 1.6 that the teachers spent 17.64 hours on Teaching in a week. (This figure excludes some aspects of the teachers' work, such as Registration, Supervision and Assembly, when they are in contact with pupils but not teaching them). The data on these aspects are provided under Administration. We have already (Paragraph 1.6) pointed out that Teaching in this sense accounts for only 33% of the teachers' overall time on work. As in the **1330 Days** study, Teaching was dominated by the three core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. There are no significant changes in the times spent Teaching since 1990.

1.19 A second point here is that the total of 212 minutes was considerably less than the sum of the individual subjects (= 480 minutes). This indicates the integrated nature of the teaching at Key Stage 1, with much of the teaching involving at least two subjects simultaneously.

1.20 Thirdly, again in line with the findings in **1330 Days**, the time available for the six other foundation subjects and Religious Education, at 105 minutes a day maximum, looks inadequate for the delivery of the "broad and balanced" curriculum of the 1988 Education Reform Act. It is equivalent to about 15 minutes a day (an hour and a quarter a week) for each subject. Many of these subjects, for example, Art, Physical Education, Music, Technology, and Geography/History organised as Topic work, involving investigations outside the school, are practical and time-consuming. On the other hand, 105 minutes is almost exactly half the overall time spent teaching, in line with expectations that the core should take at least half of timetabled time.

1.21 Finally, Assessment Whilst Teaching was being carried out for a substantial amount of time. Both

this figure and the substantial concentration on the core subjects are supported by the interview evidence, which shows teachers committed to delivering the core and assessment at the expense, for some of them, of a "broad and balanced" curriculum.

1.22 Preparation

Table 1.7 Mean time daily in minutes spent on Preparation

Preparation overall	136
Planning	98
Marking/Recording	56
Organisation	21

Table 1.7 shows the mean overall time on Preparation. This is the mean for 7 days and is equivalent to 190 minutes on the 5 week days. This enables us to see that these very experienced teachers were spending nearly as much time on Preparing (ie. Planning lessons, Marking/Recording and Organising Classrooms and Materials) as on Teaching.

1.23 The amount of time spent Marking/Recording, 6.5 hours per week, almost certainly reflects the increased pressure arising from the statutory requirement for assessment and recording of the pupils' performance in the core subjects. As we have already shown (Paragraph 1.14), Year 2 teachers spent significantly more time (8.9 hours per week) than other teachers on this aspect of their work.

1.24 Time spent organising classrooms and learning materials (2.45 hours per week) was also greater for Year 2 teachers who, as has been shown (Paragraph 1.12), spent significantly more time on this activity also. Again, the increases are almost certainly associated with the demands of the national curriculum.

1.25 Within the overall sub-category of Preparation, the most interesting changes occurred since 1990. The increase on Marking/Recording was the most important of these. It should be noted that these teachers were spending 15.9 hours per week on all aspects of Preparation, some 29% of the overall time they spent on work.

1.26 Administration

Table 1.8 **Mean time in minutes daily spent on Administration**

	7 days	Weekdays Only
All Administration	125	(170)
Parents' Meetings	14	19
Display	15	(20)
Supervision	12	17
Liaison	10	14
Worship/Assembly	10	13
Registration/Transition	22	31
Breaks (free of work)	28	38
Breaks (not free of work)	17	23

The figures in Table 1.8 are presented in two ways, for the daily mean over 7 days and for the 5 week days, since some activities were restricted to week days whilst other, eg. Display, may spread across all 7 days.

1.27 The total time on Administration has shown no significant increase since 1990, and this finding is to be expected since most of the sub-divisions tend to be controlled by the organisation of the school day and are not influenced by individual teachers' choice.

1.28 The figures for most of the sub-divisions do not show significant change since 1990 for the reason mentioned in Paragraph 1.27 above. However, three aspects of Administration show reductions from 1990. These are time on display, on supervision (35 spend less time on supervision ($p.<.001$), and on registration and transition. These findings are supported by our interview data, where teachers reported not having enough time for display and for chatting to pupils, as would happen during supervision, registration and transition. Thirty of the teachers were spending more time with parents (Wilcoxon $p.<.05$), perhaps reflecting increased accountability. It is worth noting that the teachers spent the equivalent of 60 minutes per week day on breaks and lunch times and, of this time, some 38 minutes per day were free of work. This is supported by our interview evidence and suggests that teachers were too busy to have morning and lunchtime breaks of a "reasonable" length, assumed

in the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act and in the DES Circular on the Length and Control of the School Day. However, the total time spent on breaks has not changed since 1990.

1.29 The combined figure for Supervision, Registration/ Transition and Assembly is 61 minutes per week day, 5.08 hours per week. The comparable figure for 1990 was considerably higher, 6.4 hours per week, and the reduction is in line with evidence in the interviews in Part 2, where teachers reported "snatching" time from Assemblies and spending less time talking informally to pupils, as would happen in Supervision and Transition. This figure is a substantial time in the teachers' contact with pupils, although it is not teaching in its strict sense. If this figure is combined with the time spent teaching, (Paragraph 1.17, Table 1.6), 17.64 hours per week, a total of 22.7 hours per week is spent in formal contact with pupils. Supervision, Registration/ Transition and Assembly were just over one fifth of the time that teachers spent in contact with children.

Table 1.9 **Mean time in minutes daily spent on In-service (7 days)**

All In-service	76
In-service training	17
Travel to INSET	5
Baker Days	6
Meetings (staff and other)	25
Reading documents	24

Time spent on In-service overall has remained stable since 1990, although time spent on reading documents varied sharply. As we have shown (Paragraph 1.10), Year 2 teachers in particular spent significantly more time on this than other teachers. Staff meetings and informal meetings with colleagues/inspectors, etc., averaged out at 34 minutes per week day, or just under 3 hours per week. In our interview evidence, teachers reported increases in staff meetings and in informal sessions after school, used for planning and review, especially of assessment activities. This may reflect subjective feelings of increased pressure rather than actual workload, but will still have a real effect on morale. The total time spent on all In-service activities was 8.9 hours per week, equivalent to about 50% of the time spent on Teaching each week.

1.31 Other Activities

Table 1.10 **Mean time in minutes daily spent on Other Activities**

All Other Activities	35
Governing bodies	1
Sports, Clubs, Orchestra, Plays, Trips, etc.	9
Miscellaneous	25

Other Activities was a general sub-category with no sub-division in our 1990 study, so direct comparison is difficult although, in theory, the main sub-category itself is comparable. In fact, this has increased from 26 to 35 minutes, and we are not able to explain this finding - it was not related to Year 2 teachers. There was a tendency for teachers higher up the salary scales, and especially Incentive 'B' holders and deputy heads, to spend more time on Other Activities overall ($p.<.05$), so that the explanation may be related to new formal administrative responsibilities.

1.32 FINDINGS BASED ON QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Detailed data from the questionnaire have not been provided in this report for reasons of space. At this stage we would draw attention to the following four findings, concerned with teachers' perceptions:

1.33 Teachers' perceptions of time on work in 1991 compared to 1990

We asked teachers if they thought that, compared to the same time last year, the time they were spending on work in 1991 was similar, more or less. The replies were as in Table 1.11:

Table 1.11

	Number of Teachers	%
Similar	11	21
Less	3	6
More	38	72
Don't know/can't say	1	2

Thus, most teachers believed they were working longer hours than in Spring 1990 and the time data analysis showed that those who thought they were working longer, actually were. The difference was statistically significant ($p.<.05$).

1.34 Teachers' perceptions of obstacles to the implementation of the national curriculum and assessment

We asked teachers to make a forced choice about what they saw as the most serious obstacle to their implementing the national curriculum and assessment. The figures in Table 1.12 show the response, (1990 percentages are in brackets):

Table 1.12

	1991		1990
	Number of Teachers	%	(%)
Poor pay	0	0	(1)
Poorly maintained buildings	0	0	(0)
Low level of learning resources/materials/ equipment	3	6	(7)
Lack of time	34	64	(73)
Lack of knowledge/information	1	2	(2)
Large class size	15	28	(17)

1.35 It can be seen that the pattern of responses is generally the same, with lack of time and large class size being seen as the main obstacles and accounting for 90% of responses. We argued in **1330 Days** that these two obstacles were really part of the same factor since teachers with classes of more than 25 pupils named large class size, whereas those with fewer than 25 pupils named lack of time. The increase in those naming large class size may reflect the pressure teachers were under in Spring 1991 to carry out detailed observation and assessment of pupils in small groups or as individuals. This explanation is supported by evidence in the interviews where teachers reported their inability to carry out assessment in the time available to them, and where teachers reported that they regarded a class size of around 25 as manageable for national curriculum and assessment purposes.

1.36 Priority use for extra teacher time

We asked teachers, using a forced choice item, for what purposes they would use an extra teacher, equivalent to a morning a week. The responses are shown in Table 1.13, with 1990 percentages in brackets:

Table 1.13

	1991		1990
	Number of Teachers	%	(%)
To teach small groups intensively	32	64	(48)
To help with assessment/recording	18	36	(39)
To work alongside colleagues	0	0	(8)
For non-contact time for preparation	0	0	(4)

The change is to be predicted, with no teachers this year having priority for work activities outside their own classrooms, presumably because of the pressure they were facing within them.

1.37 The "conscientiousness" thesis

In **1330 Days** we showed that teachers' perceptions about 'non-directed' time were very significant. Non-directed time is an unspecified amount of time in teachers' Conditions of Service, defined as the time needed outside the directed time of the school day for the effective discharge of duties within it. In **1330 Days** we showed that teachers' perceptions about the time they considered as reasonable for them to be expected to spend on work in non-directed time were strongly associated with the amount of time overall that they spent on work. We called these perceptions of reasonable expectations for non-directed time, "conscientious-ness", a term we chose to indicate the extent of teachers' commitment, but commitment which might be taken too far ("over-conscientiousness").

1.38 Table 1.14 shows the range of hours considered reasonable as expectations for non-directed time by the teachers, (1990 percentages in brackets):

Table 1.14

Hours considered reasonable	1991 Number of Teachers	1991 %	1990 (%)
0 - 5	15	29	(23)
6 - 10	24	46	(50)
11 - 15	11	21	(15)
16 and above	2	2	(12)

1.39 We calculated an average, using the mid-point in each Hours category, of the reasonable expectations for the 1991 sample. This was 8 hours per week, a slight reduction on the 9 hours of the 1990 sample. Under the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act directed time is approximately 32.5 hours per week. Thus, on average, the teachers thought it reasonable for them to work about 41 hours per week. In practice, as we have shown, they were working about 55 hours a week, substantially more than they considered reasonable. This is supported by the interview evidence where teachers reported resentment at their unreasonable workloads.

1.40 We tested the "conscientiousness" thesis by examining the statistical relationship between the hours considered reasonable by the teachers and the actual amount of time they spent on work. We found that "conscientiousness" was positively and highly-significantly related to time on work, the more time teachers considered it reasonable to work in non-directed time the more time they actually spent. Some of these relationships are indicated, with significance levels, in Table 1.15:

Table 1.15

"Conscientiousness" shown related to:	
Time on work overall (all days)	p.<.02
Time on work (week days)	p.<.05
Time on work overall (off school premises)	p.<.005
All In-service (all days)	p.<.001
All In-service (week days)	p.<.002
All In-service (week-ends)	p.<.001

1.41 The relationships shown in Table 1.15 reveal that,

once again, the critical factor in teachers working long hours is "conscientiousness" - the personal sense of commitment. There is no systematic set of relationships with the positional characteristics, for example, with salary status, associated with longer hours on work overall or on In-service, though teachers on higher scales did spend more time on Other Activities, as we noted above (Paragraph 1.31). This finding is supported by our interview evidence in Part 2, where teachers reported themselves as driven by conscientiousness to long hours on work.

ONE-TO-ONE COMPARISON : 1990-1991

1.42 Strictly speaking we would argue that the most convincing indication of changed hours of work between 1990 and 1991 is not a comparison between the average hours of 95 teachers in the 1990 survey and those of 53 of them in the 1991 survey. The most convincing indication would be a one-to-one comparison of the time spent in 1990 and 1991 respectively by the same 53 teachers, ie., those for whom we have data for both years. This is because the 53 for whom we have data for both years might not be representative of the 95. For example, they might have become involved in the re-run exercise for reasons that would also affect their hours on work, such as high level of "conscientiousness" or a strong commitment to demonstrating the long hours necessary to carry out teaching at Key Stage 1, or some other reason.

1.43 To carry out such a comparison was difficult because the returns were anonymous and therefore matching the year by year data records was not straightforward. However, some key responses on the questionnaire, viz. the LEA, the age, sex, school size and type, when taken in combination, enabled us to match 50 of the 53 teachers. An obvious possibility is that the teachers who participated in the study for a second year running were particularly motivated and conscientious. We checked this by comparing the total time they worked with the whole group of 95. We found their total work times were distributed evenly across the entire range of the 1990 group. A Mann-Whitney test showed no difference between them and the teachers who did not respond in 1991. We can therefore take the 1991 group as being wholly representative. It was now possible to make a one-to-one comparison. This was done in two ways: analysis of means of total time on work and main categories so as to illustrate the extent of the year or year changes; a count of the

numbers of teachers whose overall time had increased or decreased or remained the same, irrespective of the extent of such changes.

1.44 The means for total time on work for the 50 teachers for 1990 and 1991, together with the means for the main sub-categories, are given in Table 1.16:

Table 1.16 **Daily means for 50 teachers in 1990 and 1991**

	1990	1991
Total work	433	468
Teaching	149	154
Preparation	134	136
Administration	123	125
In-service	78	78
Other	28	35

1.45 Table 1.16 shows an increase in overall time spent by the same teachers in 1991 over 1990, though somewhat smaller (4.1 hours per week) than the increase shown in Table 1.1 between the means of the 95 teachers in 1990 and the 53 in 1991. It provides very powerful evidence that overall the mean workloads of these teachers had increased significantly over the year in question.

1.46 When we carried out an analysis of the numbers of teachers whose time on work had changed (increased, decreased, remained identical) the evidence became even clearer, as Tables 1.17 to 1.19 show. The Wilcoxon was test used.

Table 1.17 **Total time on work in 1990 and 1991**

Increased	40 teachers
Decreased	10 "
No change	0 "

2-tailed P <.001

Thus, 8 out of every 10 of the teachers had increased time overall on work. This matches approximately the proportion of teachers (72%) on the questionnaire who perceived their time as having increased since 1990.

1.47 It is also possible to show the number of teachers whose time had changed on work in school between 1990 and 1991. These are given in Table 1.18:

Table 1.18 **Numbers of teachers changing overall time on work on school premises in 1990 and 1991**

Increased	33 teachers
Decreased	17 "
No change	0 "

2-tailed P <.01

Thus, 2 in 3 teachers were working longer hours on the school premises than they were last year. This is an indication that teachers were working beyond their directed time on school premises and is supported by the interview evidence where teachers said that directed time was no longer used as a serious framework.

1.48 Marking and Recording were the sub-categories which showed the most clear change, as Table 1.19 shows:

Table 1.19 **Numbers of teachers changing the amount of time on Marking/Recording between 1990 and 1991**

Increase	32 teachers
Decrease	17 "
No change	1 "

2-tailed P = <.01

significance. On supervision 36 had reduced time since 1990 and this was highly significant statistically ($p.<.001$). In the interviews the teachers reported that they were forced to cut down on time on displays and informal talking to pupils because of the pressure of work.

1.51 Significance for Teachers' Work Overall

It is worth drawing attention to one aspect of all the findings reported in this part of the study. The time spent on work was time spent in Spring term 1991, ie. before the Summer term 1991 in which the administration of SATs occurred. This suggests that, for Key Stage 1 teachers, not only is the Summer term likely to be a period of intensive overload but so is the Spring term. Two terms, not one, are disrupted by the assessment and recording as currently experienced, with the implied stress on teachers' working lives, as we show in Part 2. This is especially the case since most of the Teacher Assessments summarised at the end of the Spring term have to serve as **substitutes** for the SATs, following the decision that SATs would cover only 9 of the 33 Attainment Targets. It would thus be a serious mistake to consider that the overload on teachers will be restricted to the three-week (or six-week) period in which the SATs are administered. As this study shows, long hours on work are typical of the second part of the Spring term also.

University of Warwick — Department of Education

Policy Analysis Unit

Record of Teacher Time (ROTT)

APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX 2

TIME ON WORK OVERALL BY ALL TEACHERS INDIVIDUALLY, AND BY YEAR 2 TEACHERS AND NON-YEAR 2 TEACHERS

Three tables and histograms are provided in the following three pages. From them it is possible to show the range of time spent by the 50 teachers for whom we have data for both years, and the time spent by the 20% of teachers working longest and shortest hours. These are summarised below, all as weekly mean hours:

RANGE

	Minimum (Hours)	Maximum (Hours)	Top 20% (Hours)	Bottom 20% (Hours)
All teachers	40.6	76.8	64.7	44.5
Year 2 Teachers	44.0	76.8	68.1	46.6
Non-Yr.2 Teachers	40.6	61.95	59.2	43.2

If we examine the ten teachers spending the longest time on work, nine were Year 2 teachers. Of the ten teachers spending the shortest time on work, seven were non-Year 2 teachers.

Total work involvement all days, 1991
(minutes per day)

Time	Freq	%	Cum %	Time	Freq	%	Cum %	Time	Freq	%	Cum %
348	1	2	2	425	1	2	36	497	1	2	70
353	1	2	4	428	1	2	38	506	1	2	72
370	1	2	6	429	1	2	40	511	2	4	76
377	1	2	8	438	1	2	42	512	1	2	78
378	1	2	10	444	1	2	44	514	1	2	80
389	1	2	12	448	1	2	46	522	1	2	82
393	1	2	14	462	1	2	48	524	1	2	84
399	1	2	16	465	1	2	50	525	1	2	86
401	1	2	18	472	1	2	52	527	1	2	88
406	1	2	20	473	1	2	54	530	1	2	90
406	1	2	22	482	1	2	56	531	1	2	92
411	1	2	24	484	1	2	58	565	1	2	94
412	1	2	26	489	1	2	60	571	1	2	96
417	1	2	28	492	1	2	62	594	1	2	98
420	1	2	30	493	1	2	64	658	1	2	100
421	1	2	32	495	1	2	66				
422	1	2	34	495	1	2	68				

Count	Midpoint (mins.)	One symbol equals approximately .20 teachers
2	353	**********
1	368	*****
3	383	***************
3	398	***************
6	413	******************************
5	428	*************************
3	443	***************
2	458	**********
2	473	**********
7	488	**********************************
2	503	**********
7	518	**********************************
3	533	***************
0	548	
1	563	*****
1	578	*****
1	593	*****
0	608	
0	623	
0	638	
1	653	*****

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0 2 4 6 8 10
Histogram frequency

Valid cases 50

Total work involvement all days, Year 2 teachers
(minutes per day)

Time	Freq	%	Cum %	Time	Freq	%	Cum %	Time	Freq	%	Cum %
377	1	4	4	482	1	4	40	525	1	4	76
378	1	4	8	493	1	4	44	527	1	4	80
401	1	4	12	495	1	4	48	530	1	4	84
420	1	4	16	495	1	4	52	565	1	4	88
422	1	4	20	497	1	4	56	571	1	4	92
428	1	4	24	506	1	4	60	594	1	4	96
438	1	4	28	512	1	4	64	658	1	4	100
444	1	4	32	522	1	4	68				
473	1	4	36	524	1	4	72				

Count	Midpoint (mins.)	One symbol equals approximately .10 teachers
2	378	**********
0	392	
1	406	*****
2	420	**********
2	434	**********
1	448	*****
0	462	
2	476	**********
3	490	***************
2	504	**********
3	518	***************
3	532	***************
0	546	
1	560	*****
1	574	*****
1	588	*****
0	602	
0	616	
0	630	
0	644	
1	658	*****

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0 1 2 3 4 5
Histogram frequency

Valid cases Valid cases 25

Total work involvement all days, non Year 2 teachers
(minutes per day)

Time	Freq	%	Cum %	Time	Freq	%	Cum %	Time	Freq	%	Cum %
348	1	4	4	411	1	4	36	465	1	4	68
353	1	4	8	412	1	4	40	472	1	4	72
370	1	4	12	417	1	4	44	484	1	4	76
389	1	4	16	421	1	4	48	489	1	4	80
393	1	4	20	425	1	4	52	492	1	4	84
399	1	4	24	429	1	4	56	511	2	8	92
406	1	4	28	448	1	4	60	514	1	4	96
406	1	4	32	462	1	4	64	531	1	4	100

```
  Count    Midpoint      One symbol equals approximately    .10 teachers
             (mins.)

      2         350  ********************
      0         359
      1         368  **********
      0         377
      1         386  **********
      2         395  ********************
      2         404  ********************
      3         413  ******************************
      2         422  ********************
      1         431  **********
      0         440
      1         449  **********
      1         458  **********
      1         467  **********
      1         476  **********
      2         485  ********************
      1         494  **********
      0         503
      3         512  ******************************
      0         521
      1         530  **********
                     I....+....I....+....I....+....I....+....I....+....I....+....I
                     0         1         2         3         4         5
                               Histogram frequency

Valid cases      25
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PART 2

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT 1988 ON THEIR WORKING LIVES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Part 2 of this report is a study of how teachers perceive and feel about the way their working lives have been affected by the Education Reform Act. It is based on interviews with 24 class teachers who were a 1 in 4 sample of the teachers who had taken part in our previous study, **1330 Days**. They comprised eight Main Scale, nine Incentive 'A', four Incentive 'B' and one Incentive 'C' Allowance holders, and two deputy heads. They worked in nineteen LEAs, and with class groups of from 20 to 35 pupils; eleven had Year 2 pupils in their class. The interviews were conducted off school premises, usually at the teachers' homes, or in hotels. This was intended to provide a private setting which was not dependent on the physical arrangements in a particular school and which did not require the permission, approval or even the knowledge of the head of the school. We hoped thereby that the privacy created for the interviews would enable the teachers to speak frankly and openly about how they perceived their working lives, and not feel under an obligation to be unduly discreet out of a sense of professional loyalty to the school, their colleagues, or the LEA.

1.2 We sent, in advance of the interview, an indication of the four broad areas that we wished to discuss, so that the teachers could think about them before talking to us. The areas were **WORKLOAD, WORKING CONDITIONS, MORALE, and STANDARDS**. We used a semi-structured interview schedule, and all the teachers agreed to our tape-recording the interviews. The interviews were conducted in the Spring term 1991, before the time when teachers were using SATs. We have guaranteed anonymity to the teachers so that the evidence of the interviews is presented by pseudonyms, in order that the range of individuals can be seen but individuals themselves are not identified. All the excerpts are verbatim quotations, with only the names of teachers and LEAs altered or omitted. Where appropriate, and especially in Section 2 below, we have shown the proportions of teachers holding a particular view, opposing it, or

having expressed no position in the interview by numbers in brackets. Thus (20:3:1) = 20 held the particular view, 3 opposed it and 1 did not say anything about it.

1.3 We emphasise that we are reporting teachers' perceptions of their working lives. Perceptions are not necessarily accurate reflections of reality, but how teachers see changes being introduced and how they feel about such changes will be a major influence upon their success or failure. For example, our diary evidence did not show increased time in meetings, but teachers felt that it has increased. They may resent meetings more, even though the amount of time they spend in them has not increased, because of other pressures on them.

2. FOUR GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

Before providing evidence on more specific aspects of the way teaching at Key Stage 1 has been affected by the 1988 Act, we think it would help to contextualise the findings if we outlined four general attitudes to their work held by our teachers. They provide a general frame of mind which the teachers brought to their work in Spring 1991. The four are: attitudes to the **national curriculum**, to **workloads**, to **pressure in the school day**, and to the **reduction of pleasure in teaching**.

Positive attitudes toward the national curriculum

2.1 Our teachers are amongst the ones who have been first to implement the national curriculum. Key Stage 1 teachers are the only teachers currently who know what it is like to try to teach the three core subjects (Maths, Science and English) and Technology, using the statutory orders containing programmes of study and attainment targets, and to develop techniques for assessment and recording children's performance in relation to them. What they have to say about its significance for their work is therefore particularly important.

2.2 The picture emerging directly challenges the view that teachers are hostile to the national curriculum, either in principle or in relation to its impact on their curriculum practice. Nearly all (22:2:0) of our interviewees thought that the national curriculum was a good thing in principle; it had provided a much needed

coherence and framework for the curriculum within which their purposes as teachers could be clarified, and their task of planning appropriate learning experiences supported. It had broadened their curriculum, especially in Science and to some extent in Technology. It had encouraged the staff of the schools to plan the curriculum on a whole school basis. The following quotations from five different teachers capture the typical viewpoint:

"I have been helped to order my teaching better. I have a framework to work from, which I have always wanted and never had, only ones I devised for myself. I have worked in a lot of different schools over the country and every time I went into the school I would ask, "Have you got a syllabus, please? Can I see it?" And they would say, "Oh, well, you know, that's not the sort of thing you want, there's a text book over there", and that was the general idea. But now, you know where you are going, you know what you have got to cover, and I think it's a good thing. I think once it all settles down people will be happier about it."

Denise, Year 1.

"Basically, I think it was a good idea. It's just the way it's being implemented, lack of resources, the timescale, as much as anything - it's the 'Bang, let's do it all now' instead of bit by bit and learn and improve as we go along. But, as I say, basically it was a good idea, it was what the unions had asked for and we were all for it, but it needed resourcing and implementing at the right scale."

Mary, Year 2.

'Well, to begin with I thought it was a dreadful idea but, as a parent, I'd have liked my child to have had the national curriculum because every child should get a fair deal ... because, you see, the teachers have to attend to every child in order to write records on it".

Irene, Year 2.

"Oh, God. On the one hand I think it is a good idea. I can see why it has been brought in, I think there was too much diversity between schools and, if it brings schools a little bit more in line with each other in terms of the diversity

that there was, then I think that won't be a bad thing."

Olive, deputy head.

2.3 The national curriculum had also led to teachers thinking more about pushing children further than they might have done:

"Well, when the national curriculum first hit us, like everybody else we reacted, "Oh, my God, what's all this?", and then when the dust settled we realised that, as long as you had been teaching sensibly and at the best of your ability in infant and primary school, that's what you had been doing all along - somebody had just gone to the trouble of categorising it, structuring usefully for secondary school, and we thought, "Oh, that's fine, we can cope with that". I personally, and a number of my colleagues, found that our teaching was going to be a little bit more expansive as well, we were expanding into areas that we had neglected, that we hadn't been aware of and we were focussing more on."

Patrick, Year 1.

2.4 Furthermore, even the assessment arrangements, about which there was great confusion and stress, were seen as having considerable potential for rendering systenatic the previously rather haphazard and intuitive assessment practice:

"Well, there is more record keeping and I think we are more than ever conscious of the preparation and fitting the attainment targets to our planning and keeping a check with what we've done.

"And how do you feel about that?

"I think the general idea has been quite good because it's made me more aware of what I'm doing, actually."

2.5 The principle of the national curriculum, as opposed to the pace and method of its implementation and the lack of appropriate resourcing, appears to have been accepted by our teachers. Part of the reason, according to the teachers, was that their initial, almost knee-jerk, opposition to the national curriculum diminished when they were able to construe much of the detailed attainment targets and the programmes of study

as "good practice". It tended to confirm as acceptable much of their existing practice and so increased their confidence. It would be wrong to characterise this as wild enthusiasm for the national curriculum. It was more mundane; it had not turned out as badly as they had expected, and so teachers thought that they might as well go along with it:

> "Yes, I've come to like it more as time goes on. As I said, when I was first confronted with it I was more worried by it and thinking, "What's the point of all this?" I was a bit cheesed off with it but I think as you come to be more familiar with it, I suppose you get used to anything, this is the thing. The more familiar you get with things the more you, maybe not like them, but more you're able to agree with them, you get used to working that way, so this is as good as any, I think.
>
> "And it's not a threat any more because you've shown that it can work?
>
> "No, that's right, yes. I don't feel frightened of it like I used to do. I used to look at these big books and think, "Oh, my goodness me, when are we going to read all that lot?" But now I only use them for reference, I just look at the thing that I want to do. I read them occasionally, at the whole thing, glance through them, but if we're doing a topic I prefer to look at exactly what I should be doing on that. I don't find them a threat now, no".
>
> Kathy, Reception.

2.6 Furthermore, several (12:2:10) of them talked about their enthusiasm for the "ring binders" containing the statutory orders, and a few explicitly said that they felt that they believed their practice was already being improved by their implementing the national curriculum. This was especially true in respect of their planning of children's work:

> "At our stage we are talking about, I think I would have preferred it to be guidelines rather than statutory. Having said that, there has been an awful lot of good that has come through, there has been a lot of forced planning and forced getting together of teachers, it's made us do things we might not have done so quickly, or at all - which has been good."
>
> Nina, Year 1.

Denise, who had a Year 1 class with over 31 pupils in it, said:

> "You feel that you are more accountable to people because you have got to show what you've been doing. You feel, whereas maybe in the past you left some Science because you couldn't fit your Science in that week, you have got to do it this week and you have got to get so many things in and that all the children have got to have experienced something in one way or another. Whereas, perhaps in the past, you know, you would have been a bit more relaxed about it. You might have covered the work eventually but you might leave 'Magnetism' for the next year's teacher because you weren't very good at Magnetism. That's me, you know, and things like that crop up in general."

2.7 Put briefly, we have concluded that, despite some serious practical problems currently being experienced, the hearts and minds of most our Key Stage 1 teachers had been won over to the principle of a national curriculum, although they resented the lack of consultation and the speed of change. However, this support was being undermined by three aspects of their working conditions at Key Stage 1, as is shown below.

Unmanageable Workloads

2.8 Most teachers (23:1:0) reported significant increases in the amount of time they had to spend on work and nearly all (22:2:0) saw the extent of such increases as unmanageable or unreasonable. They directly attributed the increases in part to the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, and particularly to the national curriculum and assessment. This does not contradict the position reported in Paragraph 2.2 above, since the unmanageability and unreasonableness were attributed to the manner of implementing the reforms, e.g. the number of changes being introduced simultaneously, and the speed with which they had been required to implement them, inadequate staffing levels, and inappropriate working conditions, rather than the reforms as such. Two aspects were seen as particularly unmanageable. First, assessment and recording of children's performance created difficulties and in some cases great insecurity, mainly because the teachers perceived the government policy on these issues to be in confusion, and regularly changing. Teachers simply did not know what was expected of them. In this policy

vacuum at local and central government level, most teachers were inventing new recording systems, in addition to existing ones, sometimes with the advice of LEAs. Many, as we show in Paragraph 3.10 below, were engaging in excessively detailed recording even though they did not believe that it would tell them very much that they did not already know about their pupils. The sense of uncertainty was captured by this teacher:

> "A lot of the things that we used to do, sort of rather informally, or keep mentally, now has to be set down on paper, doesn't it? And there is a lot more paperwork involved, filing things, looking over things, not so much ticking-off things at present in our school but actually just checking and writing down things.
>
> "Yes, and you have got some Year 2 children in your class?
>
> "I've got Year 2 children so I am doing this teacher's assessment thing at the moment.
>
> "And that is time-consuming or ...?
>
> "Well, I suppose it's the way you go about it. I think we are all pretty much in the dark, we really don't know. What one teacher is doing is probably very different from what other teachers are doing. What I have done, I have sort of looked at the areas and I have sort of got the class to cover lots of areas and kept the work related to those things and filed them, and this holiday I shall look through them all and I shall look through the work they have done at the beginning of the term, and I shall see what their progress is and I shall put them on to the level that I think they are now.
>
> "So you are like most other teachers, you are inventing ways of recording?
>
> "Well, it's my way of tackling it because I don't know of any other way, because we haven't been given any guidelines."

2.9 A second cause of overload was the large number of curriculum documents and other paperwork, mainly, but not exclusively from the DES, NCC, and SEAC. Well-meaning documents from other sources purporting to interpret the official documents had added to the paperwork. By Spring 1991, the teachers had reached a stage of "paper fatigue" and much of the new material being sent to them was simply not being read.

2.10 We believe that we should report, without being melodramatic, that many (14:2:8) of our teachers were under considerable stress as a result of the increased workload they were experiencing; some talked of their tiredness, irritability and depression; of sleeping badly, waking up at night thinking of things they had not done; of increased drinking; of occasional crying in the staffroom; and of a sense of guilt that they were neglecting the needs of their own families.

2.11 Since the stress showed itself in different ways, the following extract is not presented as typical, but something of the multi-faceted distress experienced by Irene, a Year 2 teacher, is revealed by it. It comes after a discussion in which she said she approved of the national curriculum, but the demands of assessing, recording and keeping up with the paperwork had overwhelmed her:

> "I feel very depressed, I mean, you try and laugh it off but you find yourself shuffling through bits of paper when you are thinking, "There are piles of children's papers there that I haven't mounted properly, or I meant to put up, or to put together into a book, they'll have to wait because these forms have got to be in by the end of the week". I just feel I'm getting more and more of my energy and time syphoned away into tackling all of these demands, and what makes it worse is that I can't see anybody ever having the time, like me, to look at it and do something about it. It seems to be a sort of gravel blanket exercise where we're being scattered with all sorts of information, data, requests for information, workloads and responsibilities in the hope that something will come out of it. I think what will come out of it is lots of shell-shocked teachers. I just .. some days I feel I'm not doing my job because I'm too tired or I'm too emotionally strained, and I think that's wrong because I'm not being paid to fill in these reports and to read these documents and these papers. When you do take the time to read some of them they're so wildly improbable for the children I'm teaching."

Jane who has a mixed age class of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children, one of the younger ones in our sub-sample at just over 26 years of age, reported the physical symptoms of her stress:

> "You said a few moments ago that you felt yourself getting more stressed when you are

dealing with the children, is that stress taking any particular form?

"I suppose physical would be the most obvious side of it in that I get a lot of headaches - I always go to the staffroom, dive for the aspirin. I find that I often come home very wound up and feeling quite aggressive because I've got no outlet for that stress and, sometimes, not being able to sleep, and things like that, because you are so wound up. You come home and you do more work and you haven't had the time to just let it all go, and so you feel angry, I suppose, the whole time and, because you get cross with the children because you are feeling stressed, that makes me angry with myself. I suppose the physical symptoms, the headaches and the aggression, are the worst."

2.12 We would not wish to overstate this. Most teachers were coping by anticipating that stress levels would ultimately be reduced. They were imagining a light at the end of the tunnel, when the changes would settle down and assessment arrangements would be agreed. They were not yet familiar enough with all the targets and levels to use them without constant reference to the documents, "They're still in the handbag, not in the head". Indeed, two teachers who did not feel stressed any more had reached their state of mind by a conscious decision to restrict demands upon their time that they thought were unreasonable. Mary, a Year 2 teacher said:

"I love my job and I like to put a lot of effort into it, but I am not going to let it become the whole thing - I have hobbies and my family life. I like to get out and about with my family, particularly at week-ends - I don't see that school should take over your week-end. I think the more we do,in many ways, the more the Government will put on us - but I think that we have to say that, "I am doing that much and that's it - no more"."

They had broken through the "absurdity barrier" of the current demands. Adopting a "like-it-or-lump-it" attitude they had decided that they would do their best, but not at the expense of their personal life or the peace of mind, "If they don't like the way I teach they will have to sack me, and that would be that".

2.13 Nevertheless we would make two points. This study was carried out in Spring 1991, before teachers engaged in the Summer term SATs administration, recognised as

untypically burdensome. We were concerned with what, in effect, might be more like the "normal" workload under the national curriculum. Second, if there is a light at the end of the tunnel, it is at the end of a very long tunnel. Since we carried out the research, History and Geography statutory orders have been published, and reports from Art, PE and Music working groups are imminent. All of this will have similar impact upon teachers to that created by the core subjects and Technology, the only subjects in statute, in Spring 1991, for our teachers. For these teachers we cannot envisage a reduction in stress arising from unmanageable workloads in the short or medium term. We would also point out that although in June 1990 Ministers were promising to reduce the demands on teachers' time at Key Stage 1, in practice, as we have shown in Part 1, the time spent on work has actually increased and is seen by them as having increased.

The Running Commentary syndrome

2.14 The overload outlined in Section (b) above refers to the *overall* workload of teachers, but we found teachers' experiencing work *within the school day* as frustrating in a specific way. All the teachers (24:0:0) reported that they were experiencing the work of teaching differently from before, in a way that was to do with the mental state in which they conducted their work. One of them, Ann, illustrated this state of mind by using a simile which we have called, following her, the 'Running Commentary' syndrome. There are two elements to this syndrome; a commitment to working very hard, doing one's best out of conscientiousness, linked to a lack of a sense of achievement in their work, despite the effort, because there was always something else to be done. Ann, who had a rich, if mixed, set of metaphors to illustrate her perceptions, had 32 children, Year 1 and Year 2 combined, in her class:

> "Well, what is frightening now is that we are being blinkered now into the national curriculum and so everything else is hanging on by its fingernails really. That's how I feel at the moment - the sheer amount of time required to cope with what you hope to achieve - it just seems to be expanding to fill the day and I am constantly getting to the state where I am noticing it far more now that I never complete what I hope to achieve. There is always, like, a carry-forward so that you never get the feeling at the end of a session or the end of a day, "Great, I've done

this that I hoped we would do", there is always something else.

"Is that what you used to do then?

"No, I didn't use to feel that, I didn't use to get to the end of the day and think, "Oh, gosh, I haven't done this" or "I haven't done that". I used to get to the end of the day and think, "Oh, great, we have done this". So this has been a major change as far as I am concerned. So there is this Running Commentary, really, in the background, saying that, "You haven't done this" or "You haven't done that", which I find very annoying considering that you work so hard.

"How do you deal with that - do you just say, "Oh, well, in the end I've done my best", and that's it and ...?

"I'm trying to do that - but I am fighting it really because I am quite conscientious and I obviously want to give it my best shot".

2.15 Despite a tendency under imposed change to invent a Golden Age in the past when everything was better, we think that the Running Commentary syndrome is an important aspect of what it means to be a contemporary teacher at Key Stage 1. Mary, more prosiacally but just as clearly, put it this way:

"I think it's just the pressure. You start the week with things you've got to get done and at the end of the week you seem to have more things on the list that you haven't done than you had on at the start of the week. You just feel that you can never, ever finish. As the year goes on you just seem to get more and more behind. It's just incredible."

Likewise Sheila, with mixed Reception and Year 1 pupils said:

I suppose the lack of time is at the crux of everything, lack of time in the classroom, lack of time out of the classroom - there's a constant feeling of never being able to do it well enough, never being good enough because there are so many demands. I think that it is something which, I mean, personally, it's very hard to deal with. You feel you can never be on top of the job, never be able to meet the needs of the children in the

way that you feel they should be met, because of so many pressures which the national curriculum has put on us and just don't seem to be recognised. Those pressures just don't seem to have been really fully taken into account and I would say that is really at the root of everything - the time - there just isn't any of it. I just constantly feel stressed by the fact that you know what you want to do, you know how you want to achieve it but you can't. It's sort of a feeling of failure, I suppose, really, that's the hardest".

2.16 The syndrome was experienced, though expressed differently, by every one of our teachers. The message to policy makers, LEAs and to governing bodies is that until the schools are staffed, or organised, in ways that provide more time in the school day for teachers to do what is required of them, the teachers will continue to experience their working days in school as an enervating treadmill, working flat out but getting nowhere fast. It is not a state of mind that is tolerable even for the most committed teachers.

The reduction of pleasure

2.17 A finding common to nearly all our teachers (20:0:4) was that the introduction of the national curriculum and assessment was making their classrooms less pleasant and enjoyable for them as teachers and, perhaps more importantly, for their pupils. There were two aspects to it, viz. a more instrumental approach to curriculum activities, and a more cognitively pressurised relationship between teacher and pupil.

2.18 Many teachers (17:0:7) reported that the kind of curriculum activities that they had introduced, or planned to introduce, had, or would, become less interesting and less motivating for the children as a result of the national curriculum, which they perceived as forcing them to concentrate upon activities that, while certain to help them hit the attainment targets, were safe and dull. One head had felt it necessary to remind her staff that they should let children enjoy themselves:

"She insisted, as we call it, that the children should have fun.....I think her attitude to the national curriculum is right; it shouldn't be the be all and end all...at times you should be able to ignore it. Like when we had snow, we ignored

what we had planned and went out into the snow and built two snowmen. We were laughing because we felt sure that it covered some attainment target, but actually we were just playing as far as the children were concerned".

Teachers generally, however, tended to feel impelled to prevent pupils being sidetracked away from the planned task in hand, as did Mary:

"Yes, I suppose there is not really so much time to talk to them any more. If a child comes up and says, just a comment or has something to show, it's, "Sorry, haven't got time now, save it for showtime or playtime". And of course they've forgotten, very often I've forgotten as well, so, yes, it's the talking, it's the talking and the listening and giving some of the children the attention that they need".

2.19 One or two were more explicit. Betty, who later on in the interview said, "I don't sing as often in my class any more", meaning that she spent less time with her reception class singing songs and rhymes, reported an activity she and a colleague had planned as an assessment task:

"The national curriculum doesn't worry me in the structure that it's given us. It's the assessment of it that has proven difficult. I had a lovely one, Gill, the other week - she devised a lovely assessment where she had got a box and she sat a child in it and, "How do you get this child to move along?" "Well, you push it", and she rolled wooden rollers to do it with, and cans that would collapse, and cardboard tubes, and so forth, and she was doing it in the classroom and I was at the other end, and the thing was quite controlled except for the fact that ... how do you stop other children being fascinated with what you're doing? And how do you say to them, when you are continually trying to stimulate their interest, "Go away, this isn't for you"? It can't be done - and how do you decide which one had said "Pull" and which one had said "Push", and would they have said "Push" if the other one hadn't said it first? It was a delightful idea which really got all the class involved - they were fascinated by it - but it didn't work as an assessment.

"So what happened, I mean, what happened about that assessment and ...?

"Well, we carried on as an activity. We did it, yes, but we couldn't assess the child, we couldn't find a way of finding out - we had our assessment sheet in front of us and we were trying to find out which children had got the idea that you could move it by pushing or you could move it by pulling or ... but it's difficult to decide which child had decided what, which children had the concepts and which had picked it up from the others.

"So what happens about that, I mean you planned to do some assessment?

"Well, I think in future we are going to have to find something a bit more boring."

2.20 Betty's preparation of more conventional activities also had been affected adversely:

"I used to have a cupboard at home of resources and now we are sorting out attainment targets rather than gathering materials, we are justifying what we are doing in terms of attainment targets. I don't think the quality of teaching is being improved by that, I don't think the quality of my art table is being improved because, instead of delving into my kitchen cupboard at home, through my lentils and my split peas and so forth, I'm sorting out which attainment targets I'm going to be covering by this activity. I'm doing less of the qualitative preparation work, which is what reception work is all about, than I used to. I'm putting it down on paper for nobody."

2.21 Personal warmth extended to children had also been affected,according to Kathy, another reception teacher, though it might be imperceptible to the children:

"It is because you don't have the time these days to talk to children about what they've had for their birthday - to make time. You know there is time in the day when you have got that class together and that is a prime learning time. You can actually do a teaching activity, albeit in a group or in a class, and when a child sort of comes in clutching a cuddly toy that he has had for his birthday, you have to find time for it, but you do it with perhaps not quite the same enthusiasm. You're quite aware that there is something else you ought to be doing at the same time and maybe, even though you don't mean to be, you are sometimes a little dismissive with the children."

2.22 This change was not what the teachers wanted, and was in conflict with their notions of how they should relate to children. We think the explanation is in the sub-text to much of our interview sequences where there was an uneasy notion of accountability; the notion that someone, somewhere, would soon be checking up on the teacher to see if she was getting on properly with pushing the children through the prescribed curriculum. Those checking up might be parents, inspectors or the head, but in the minds of the teachers there would be someone. Around some corner, soon, would come Key Stage Cops, chasing up the teachers. This paranoiac and fearful attitude appeared to be infecting relationships and curriculum activities in classrooms in ways that, despite themselves, teachers found pervasive. If the trend to reduce the pleasure in infant schooling for teachers and children continues, it will be profoundly destructive, reducing motivation for teachers to remain teachers and for pupils to take to learning.

3. SPECIFIC FINDINGS

The management of teachers' time

3.1 We have noted already that most teachers perceived the Education Reform Act 1988 as having increased the amount of time they had to spend on work. This had occurred because of the need for extra planning, assessment and recording, which in itself had meant the teachers had to spend time familiarising themselves with the national curriculum documents. In addition teachers had been spending more time in meetings, on paperwork, and in INSET training. All but four teachers estimated that they were working between 50 and 60 hours a week. We had thought that this would be a source of resentment, intruding, as it would have to, into teachers' personal and social lives. And it was resented for this reason, as we show in Paragraph 3.41 below to some considerable extent.

3.2 However, the greatest source of resentment was not the time spent itself, but the waste of their time - the sense of spending time on activities that they saw as fairly fruitless - that the pressurised teachers frequently encountered. Ellen, a deputy head, captured the mood of many teachers, a feeling that they could be

spending their time more productively, but were not able to do so:

> "I was thinking about it the other night and I would say that I have always spent a lot of time on teaching and I would always go in during the holidays and do work because I could see why I was doing it, and I enjoyed doing it. Now - I am not sure whether I do actually spend a lot more time on it now - but I am begrudging it because I am not enjoying the work and I don't see a lot of point to what I am doing.
>
> "So it's not the amount of time?
>
> "No - when directed time came in for me I thought ... well, I knew I was doing more than that anyway, so it didn't bother me - it annoyed me because I had always given it more time. Yes, I thought that was absolutely ridiculous because most of the teachers I knew did that time and more anyway. I probably do spend more time now but the time I spend is not ... I don't always choose it. It's to do with meetings, having to go to meetings, having to look at papers and things that I possibly have got to do but don't want to do, where the time before I was directing myself and I was doing what I wanted to do.
>
> "So it's not time you spend on work itself that you resent, it's what you have to spend it on that you are resentful about?
>
> It's what I have to spend it on. It's worrying about ... at one time I was very confident that I spent this time and it helped. It was definitely obvious I spent more time and I had a good classroom and I felt I was a good teacher, but now I am not so sure any more because I am side-tracked by all the things I am not able to concentrate on. I'm not sure that I am using it wisely or that I get the choice. I have to spend so much time on things that I don't actually want to do, covering meetings and other things."

3.3 The teachers who found their time wasted by the poor management of the school, were particularly angered by it. We found teachers who reported that their heads simply had not kept up with the documents and therefore had added to the workload that their Key Stage 1 teachers had to take on. Helen was responsible for assessment in her school and felt strongly about it:

> "I think one of the problems with working with a Head like I am at the moment is that you end up dissipating time and spending a whole evening doing something that should have been done much more efficiently. So, yes, I do envisage that the two terms are going to be busy with the assessment and the reporting, mainly because I think I am going to have to do an awful lot of being available to staff and helping them through and talking them through and sorting out their problems and their concerns."

She saw the problem as the head's failure to set priorities that matched the demands of the national curriculum. When pressed to illustrate what was needed, Helen gave the following commentary:

> "I think what I would have liked to have seen in management was somebody who was on top of all the paperwork, was able to filter it. I do think this is something that Heads have to do, they do have to read everything that lands on their desk and to decide priorities. Yes, I think that is what I would want to see - somebody who would be able to say, "Right, this is a priority for others and, as a management team, this is what I want to deal with". At the moment, would you believe, we haven't got a school development plan, they cannot organise themselves and get that together So everything seems to be carrying equal weight, whether it's this dinner lady was away to-day so that class was unsupervised, to the assessment orders have just come in - it's all equal."

3.4 Headteachers who had not kept up with change and had landed their staff with extra work were excoriated by a few of our teachers, especially those in infant sections of JMI schools where the head and deputy had left the infant teachers to fend for themselves. The following horror story from Betty, reception teacher in a JMI school, is extreme, but is echoed in other schools where Key Stage 1 teachers have been given only minimal support:

> "We've got a male head, a male deputy, both of whom are feckless. The Authority is actually running an assessment meeting in a fortnight for all the heads of primary schools and he's not going! And so the deputy said, "Well, if he's not going I'm not going", so at the moment we've got nobody going. So I mean, one teacher who is in Key Stage 1 - and she is absolutely frantic because she's getting no support - she keeps going

to these meetings, coming back, trying to get what she's trying to do across, and she gets nowhere because the head pulls out his diary and says, "We've got to arrange the May Fair" or "We've got more important things to do". He doesn't even know what we are doing in terms of this assessment - he doesn't know what we're doing, but we can't, in turn, I mean, we can't turn round and say, "Well, he's not doing it so we're not going to do it" - we can't do that. I mean, it would be easier ... I've no doubt that there are some teachers in the juniors doing just that, closing the door - "He's not bothering so why should we?" And the deputy, he's got nowhere to go and disapproves of the head - doesn't like him - they are on speaking terms barely. We are just hoping that if we get it set up in the infants the juniors will take it on board - but they don't really know what we are doing. No, it's frustrating, we are working in a vacuum. Having said that, the Adviser who comes in is totally bewildered by what we are doing. He's very ... he's a lovely, charming gentleman and he comes in and asks us ... and he's very encouraging, but we are telling him, he's not telling us - he's not in a position to advise us."

3.5 Headteachers or LEAs who had invented, encouraged or insisted upon the use of complex recording systems in particular seem to have added to time burdens. Felicity, with reception and Year 1 pupils in her year, said:

"Whatever work you decide to do with your children for that particular week, you have to decide each week what you are going to assess them on. You have to ensure that you tick off what you have done.

"Have you got your own check sheets?

"We have an LEA assessment sheet which we fill in little boxes but, apart from that being in reception and middle, you make your own up as you go along in what we call a 'Day Book'. Obviously, you have always done the Reading but now you tick everything off. If there is a computer game on, you make sure you tick everybody off and on as they go there.

"This is on a separate list from the LEA, is it?

"At the end of each term we fill in the little boxes, as we call them. Apart from that, we keep

a daily record of everything the children do, whatever task you have given them - I am just saying a computer, whatever activity you have given them - for their Technology that day. You make sure that you notice them going to that table and tick off that they have completed that activity. So you assess, or know that they can't be assessed, on any level now. At least you know that they have what we call 'visited' it. You know that they have done that piece of work if you have ticked them off and if you think they have completed it satisfactorily. Though to say they understand or know what they are on about is another matter altogether. We make up in the book a list of names, a page for Maths, a page for Technology, a page for Science, etc. - you just tick it off when you know they have been there. A lot of ticking, I can tell you, now! We keep these records ourselves and from these we can fill in the 'boxes' for the assessment.

"Who else would look at them other than you?

"Nobody really, unless somebody came in and asked, and that is proof that they have done it. But, apart from that, it is just a record to tell me what children haven't done it.

"Is there a sheet for every day?

"Yes, there is a sheet for every day, really."

3.6 The most savage ire, however, was reserved for time wasted on INSET training. There were some teachers who saw what was provided by their LEAs as helpful, but most (15:6:3) teachers regarded it with something approaching contempt for the waste of their time. Ann was typical of these:

"I also have to place on record that the quality and the content of the courses we have been given from the LEA have, in the main, been abysmal - they have done nothing to increase our confidence in the national curriculum, given us any realistic guidelines that we had used, or left us feeling that we could have used the time in a constructive way, and that has added really to the stress because we don't seem to be receiving any quality instruction from people who we would expect to be leading us forward.

"Why do you think that is?

"Well, I don't think they know what they are doing, basically. I would say that, on the whole,

over the past year, I have yet to be on a satisfying course. There have been some elements in Science, for example, where I have gone on a course which has been run for a specific purpose - such as 'variables' - in fact, the Science team have come out better than the other two. Whether it is because they have been able to do the specific work which illustrates the points and they have been able to sit back and discuss it, I don't know. But the overall courses on the English document or the Maths document were very, very disappointing. And also, the quality of the presentation from the members of staff - and really this is coming to a head now - I am sitting back and looking at these people who are, in the main, serving teachers or who have had serving experience, and wondering about the quality of education I am receiving from these people."

Likewise, Helen, who also was suspicious of the motives of those doing the training:

"If I felt it was all worthwhile I wouldn't mind, but such a lot of it is just absolutely nonsense, it's an absolute waste of time. These five 'Baker Days', as we call them, and the two extra days that we had to have last year and this year, I have honestly learned nothing new, no-one has been able to tell me anything that has helped me in my job at all. So-called advisers I don't think know any more than we do and cannot advise at the moment. We have got one who we are doing this assessment with and I feel he isn't half a step ahead of us and it really is a waste of time.

"Would you say that was general about the In-service training you have been offered, both school-organised and LEA-organised?

"Yes. Quite honestly, and everyone on the staff feels exactly the same, these five days, they are paying lip-service to the time we are being asked to re-train, but when you have been in the job so long there is not a lot they can tell that is new and, most of the time, they are trying to get ideas out of us. They come and say, "Right, we will split into groups and you will do this and you will come back and report". All they want to do is pick our brains and they go off to the next school with the idea."

Olive, a deputy head, experienced both ignorance and mismanagement:

"I think on the whole it's been very poor, very poor - too late - and even when we have gone for courses it hasn't really met the needs that we have had but, from the Authority's point of view, they are saying that they don't know either. I have been mainly to Maths - you have tended to go to your own curriculum area which I was at the time - the Maths document came out and the advisers and the people at the courses said that they didn't really know much more than us, and I felt that I was one step ahead of them anyway, sitting there and thinking, "Yes, I know this". I was actually sent back from one course that I went on because the first half was exactly the same as I had had the last time, although it was meant to be a follow-on, so I went back to school. Most of it in terms of training, in the end we developed ourselves, how we were going to bring the schemes in because the Authority's provision for training is that poor."

3.7 A small minority of teachers saw things differently. They were in well-managed schools, and in LEAs which had provided positive and well-developed training initiatives. This interview sequence with Irene illustrates their position:

"So the implementation of the national curriculum isn't causing you any real problems?

"No, that's right. Everything's being handled very well in our school, it's all, sort of, running really smoothly. The head's got it very well organised .. we have three year plans.

"So it's a case of good management?

"Well, it is, yes, but basically I think I'd put it all down to the authority. There's no room for inefficiency in our authority, they'd step in quickly if that happened. They're really on the ball and they've gone all out to make sure the national curriculum is done properly in all their schools. The inspectors are always in, they're very helpful, you get good support."

Likewise, Kathy was grateful for the supportive management style of her head:

> "I get the impression, from what you're saying, that your school is taking the national curriculum very seriously?
>
> "We are, yes. But on the other hand, as I said, our headmaster .. I wouldn't criticise him at all because he's very understanding and he takes the attitude to do as much as you can of it, and he's always encouraging, you know, he's a great one for saying, "You'll do it, you'll do it" - you know, he builds up your confidence. He said, "Don't worry about it, you're already doing it", and you <u>are</u> if you think about it. But he does like us, on the other hand, to keep records and to present records and to be organised, which I agree with. I mean, this is why I spend .. I wouldn't have to spend three hours, I suppose, every night doing it, on average .. I mean, some nights I wouldn't spend three hours, you know what I mean."

These were in a minority, but they showed how, under more effective management and with high quality training, the stress could be reduced and the skills and confidence of the teachers could be boosted.

3.8 We also found that on the whole the division of time into directed and non-directed time, despite being embodied in the legal framework of teachers' pay and conditions, for all practical purposes had been reduced to a minimalist system of ensuring that everyone had in their diaries key meeting times whether the weekly staff meeting, INSET days, AGMs or parents' evenings. All but two teachers worked in contexts where directed time was seen as a bit of a joke, and this included teachers in the very few schools where the school day was formally directed.

3.9 **<u>Commentary</u>**

We conclude that the teachers workloads' were seen as having been substantially increased by the demands of the national curriculum and assessment, to the point where teachers could not do all the work that was being expected of them. This was true even in schools seen to be well managed. In all settings, teachers were having to snatch time in the school day from other important activities, by not participating in assembly for example, or by not having a reasonable lunch break, in an attempt to do what was needed. But the explanation for the long working hours was only partly the demands of the national curriculum. The other side of the coin was local and institutional - the poor use

of their time by heads and INSET trainers, and where this happened, it evoked great anger and even contempt from teachers already under great pressure. Yet, where teachers saw the school as effectively managed by the head, or the INSET effectively delivered by LEAs, they were immensely supported by it.

Delivering the national curriculum

3.10 The great majority of the teachers were attempting to make the national curriculum work, as might be expected given their generally positive attitude to it and their recognition that they had statutory responsibilities related to it. There were three aspects, viz., planning, implementing and assessing/recording.

3.11 In respect of planning, they had been largely helped by the publication of the statutory orders in Mathematics and English and Science, especially if they were working in a school that had anticipated their publication by whole school planning.

> "Well, we have found that once we got the national curriculum we saw what it was in Mathematics and in English, and we were already covering everything anyway - there were no surprises there. When we knew that Science was coming, we devised a Science Scheme for the school - we already had topics organised and all we had to do was just change one or two, bring them down from Junior 1 into Top Infant. I think the only thing we had to change was 'Magnetism' - it was Junior 1 who was doing it and we felt we had to bring it down into Top Infant so that they could achieve the attainment target in Level 2. So our schemes of work were already worked out and, fortunately, they fit the national curriculum."
>
> Patrick, Year 1.

3.12 English and Mathematics had been the easiest to accommodate to existing practice, and most teachers reported that their planning in Science had been improved particularly by the Science orders which had helped them identify gaps in their current practice. Teachers reported that they were even excited by the possibilities in Science:

"I particularly think that Science wasn't taught enough in primary schools and I am very pleased now that I am actually teaching more, because it's such fun once you have got it going right."

Jane, reception, Year 1 and Year 2 combined.

3.13 Secondly, whole school planning and continuity are seen as having been strengthened or supported by the publication of the statutory orders. For example:

"For our school I think it has done us a lot of favours, having to plan, and we do plan as a whole school over two years and we ensure that each child covers each level of each attainment target so many times within their primary education so that has to beneficial obviously. It has also made us all aware of where we all are in the perspective of the whole school ... helped us see where our children have come from and where they are going to..."

Vivienne, Years 1 and 2 combined.

3.14 In some schools the planning process was helped by a division of labour amongst curriculum co-ordinators:

"I work with topics and before we do a topic, each term, teachers who are going to be doing that particular topic get together and we do a topic web and then we each take a part - I take Science, another teacher takes English and one takes Maths, and we see how that relates to the national curriculum. And that means that, by the end of the year, we have covered the attainment targets we are supposed to have.

"So has the national curriculum affected planning in any way?

"Yes, it has affected planning, but the way we actually teach is main-topic-based. We have chosen the topic, then align that to the national curriculum, rather than thinking about attainment targets we have to cover first.

"How do you feel that you're achieving a balance across the curriculum?

"Well, I think in each individual year we try not to cover all the attainment targets. You are taking some and going into that rather than trying to cover them all in one year, which we originally

tried to do - I think everybody did. But it doesn't work, making all the things fit in every year, whereas now we try not to do all of them.

"Who has the overview of what is happening?

"Co-ordinators within the school - Science, English, Maths co-ordinators. Obviously the Science co-ordinator will suggest which Science is to be done and talk about it as well. The co-ordinator talks about the topics we are going to be doing and talks through that."

Nina, Year 1.

3.15 Implementing the curriculum had proved more challenging, primarily because of the requirement to differentiate work according to pupil capacities, and because the teachers had found that implementing the national curriculum had posed new, or highlighted old, issues of class management. Perhaps this was especially understandable in Jane's case, since she had reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in her class.

"When you actually plan your work, have you yet reached the stage where you are working towards specific attainment targets?

"Yes.

"And, presumably, you have these different levels for the different children in your class?

"Yes, it's terribly difficult though and terribly time-consuming when I do my lesson plan. I am meant to key-in everything I am preparing to an attainment target or a level that I am working to, and you know how teaching is some times, you don't actually teach everything that you have planned, and then you go back through it to check, "Have I actually met that target or have some of them met it?" And this week, because I have not been teaching, I have been on a course, I'd left it to really study in depth all the stuff to do with my teacher assessment and I am just getting really panicky now because I don't know how I am going to get it all in, because I have got nine children in Year 2 - and they are smashing kids, they work really hard - but it's really difficult to spend a long time with them because of the demands of the rest of the class."

3.16 The teachers who had classrooms organised so that children could take some responsibility for simple decisions themselves, decisions such as when to stop one activity and move onto another one, or decisions about which resources and materials to use - in brief, classrooms organised around groupwork and some degree of pupil independence - were the ones who had found class management issues somewhat less intractable. This style of organisation freed up teachers' time in the class because it freed them from persistent but routine requests from the children:

> "We started really last September by moving our classrooms around to have designated areas. That is one of the things they asked you to do. This is all time! And then we started - we labelled all the drawers so that they know that that's Technology, that's Science, etc., and we covered all our table tops so they know that Maths is blue, Science is red, etc. Things like that are time-consuming so, as I said, it takes a lot of time.
>
> "So at the same time as the national curriculum was coming in, for you there was this change of style?
>
> "We didn't have to do it - the LEA helped us with training. Again, that's time-consuming, but we felt it would help us with the national curriculum because this is what they were preaching, because it gives you more time because the children decide themselves, they don't come up to you and say, "Can I go in the sand?", "Can I go and do a painting?" - they decide themselves. We don't negotiate everything - we are sticking to our main Maths and our main English and we tell them they have to do that and then they can negotiate - so it does actually work. I would say that you don't get these children coming up to you and saying, "Shall we draw the time?"
>
> "So it is almost like a class management technique?
>
> "It is. This is why they were pushing it - to help you to manage the class better so that you do have more time to sit with the children through all these assessments. It does work to a certain extent with us like that - you are supposed to give the other children low input activities if you are working with a group. So, all in all, it's been a big change but it is a change for the better - but it does involve a lot of work."
>
> Felicity, reception and Year 1 combined.

3.17 It should be said that this was not a universal solution to class management of national curriculum delivery on grounds of the quality of the independent learning. As Irene, a Year 2 teacher argued:

> "I find classroom control and management a problem - and I'm an experienced teacher. But it's so difficult to organise the children so that they're doing something while you teach a group. The idea is that you train your children so well that they don't bother you. I'd like to be able to do that ... but I can't. I spend a lot of time trying to organise them so that they <u>don't</u> bother me ... you see, you <u>can</u> do that ... but the work's so dead easy that they're wasting their time ... it's just bin fodder!"

The other solution reported to us was that the teachers had reduced the frequency with which they heard children read. For Key Stage 1 teachers, committed to getting the pupils to learn the basics, this had proved a major dilemma, and one about which they felt guilty, as Betty, a reception teacher, revealed:

> "It is impinging, it has to be impinging because we used to always hear them read five times a week and now it's three. It's distressing because this is what - and I'm not alone in this in our school, the other teachers feel like I do - we are trying to hang on to that.
>
> "How do you cope with that? I mean, how do you deal with that? As I understand it, what you are saying is that you believe that you ought to be involved in hearing them read once a day and you can't do it because ...?
>
> "They realise - we do mock tears, I mean, because we've got to maintain this priority with the children, that Reading is important. And, "I'm sorry, we've made the buses to-day", or, "We did something else", we will explain it away. But we will try to get it across to the children that we feel it was important and we are sorry that we missed it.
>
> "And, generally, what stops you doing that, at the moment anyway, is the planning and the time spent on the assessment - is that it?
>
> "The time spent on assessment and records. I mean, all this is taking away from what was originally done. This is all new. Before,

without that, we did - I did always. It's only in the last two years that I haven't heard every child read every day.

"And you don't like it?

"Definitely I don't like it - I mean, I'd go back to that to-morrow really, if I could - it is my priority."

Likewise Patrick, who had Year 1 children:

"There are too many attainment targets. Language isn't too bad - the Maths, there is an awful lot of attainment targets there to cover and the whole essence of the national curriculum as I see it is that they do want the children to be more independent, more investigative and, to be more investigative, you have got to spend time with then - and you can't because of other pressures in the classroom. I keep going back to Reading, but, to me, reading is a paramount thing for an infant child, to be heard to read, to be able to pick up on their problems, and the time I spend on reading is not as much as I used to do because there are too many attainment targets to get through. I am hoping that they will reduce some attainment targets in those two areas, Science in particular, because they are going to introduce Geography and History and this is going to be another horrendous burden put upon us."

Denise (Year 1) and Brenda (Year 2) reflect the dilemma also:

"I feel desperate about hearing children read. It doesn't seem to matter how well you organise your day or your week to hear children read, to give them a fair crack of the whip. You must hear them a little bit often I think, and I find that very hard to fit in. With 31 children in the class I can only hear them read properly, like, twice a week, and that worries me a great deal. I know they are reading while they are writing and that sort of thing, but it seems so vital to me - that's one of my main worries."

(Denise)

"I mean, assessment is here to stay, we are led to believe, but they don't tell us really how to do it. You know, you get your class working and you

think, "Right, I will sit down and assess these children", and you find you have constant interruptions and you don't have time to do it. And then Reading suffers, Reading suffers terribly. And the one-to-one with children suffers - well, it does in my case - maybe I feel I am doing it wrong."

(Brenda)

3.18 We have already said something about the problems teachers encountered in assessing and recording the pupils' performance against statements of attainment in the national curriculum. We characterise the teachers' perceptions of the expectations held for their practice in assessment and recording as confused, fearful and, in the words of a recent survey by HMI, "fervent but unfocused." Most (19:2:3) took the view that since they did not know what was expected of them in terms of the frequency with which they were required to assess and record, or what would count as good evidence of a child's attainment, they had better play safe and overdo it. The consequence seems to have been a boom time in recording systems, immensely time-consuming to complete, and some of which had to be completed, as befits the ethos of the infant school, in gay colours. We have recorded instances of daily checklists, boxes of index cards, with one card for each sub-statement, wheels, and circles. Ann (Years 2 and 1) illustrated one of these complex systems:

"We have also had an extra member of staff who has been appointed to assist us with the assessment, and this has led to a lot of additional discussion ...

"Sorry to interrupt you - do you mean the extra member of staff has created <u>more</u> work?

"Yes, because now we are going through the national curriculum documents interpreting every word - How do we intend to assess? What does this attainment target mean? How are we interpreting it? How are we going to record it? And, leading on from that, the school has developed its own method of assessment which is extremely time-consuming.

"The school has invented its own?

"Yes.

"And is it, in your own view, more time-consuming than some others?

"Yes, extremely - on a scale of 1 to 10 - 9½! It's a large circle, with the child being in the centre and then moving out in ever-widening ripples. Each attainment target has its own box and, when the child has attained that achievement target in our opinion, we colour it in in different colours according to the year group. So, you are passing on a picture of a child as a coloured circle - and we are doing this in English, Maths and Science.

"So you have three circles for each child?

"Yes."

In Irene's school, the bureaucratisation of assessment and recording was almost fully developed:

"Recording what you've done, because everything has to be recorded .. filling in the national curriculum record sheets .. that takes a lot of time. But records have to be so simple that the teacher need only take a quick look at them and they should be meaningful .. but ours are quite complicated and we're doing profiling as well .. we've got to provide evidence of their work in a file and we've decided, in our school, that we'll photograph craft work and things like that. We've all got filing cabinets in our classrooms .. we've got the national curriculum folders in the bottom and our national curriculum record sheets in as well .. our three year planning .. all the children's personal records we keep in there now. I am always being sent bits of paper about something to file."

3.19 Three points need to be drawn out about the invention, development and use of these complex systems. First, most (16:0:8) teachers perceived them to be either unnecessary or inappropriate, or (worse still) temporary stop-gaps until yet another system would be required of them. Second, they were in addition to existing records, not replacements for them. Third, the teachers quoted above had been required by their heads to use the system described, but even the teachers who had not been required to fill in such records, had invented complex systems for themselves. The motivation in these cases was the fear that inspectors would be checking up on them, an anxiety to be fair to pupils, or a desire to prove that assessment and recording would not reveal anything to teachers that they needed to know, and did not already know. Betty, like many others, thought the information generated by her assessments would not be useful:

"Now, suddenly, you can't produce an assessment that doesn't do that - I mean, it's fundamental to an infant classroom to make everything interesting and you don't say, "Go away, it's not your turn". If they are interested you develop that and encourage them, and if one can help another then you develop that as well - you don't say, "Now don't tell him, this is an assessment". I haven't got the answer to this - I haven't got the answer to the assessment. I did one with a garage where I was doing positioning with a car above and a car below, and a rope, and so forth. Now, that worked as an assessment, but I worked with six children and a table - I had one by my side and I assessed that child individually while the others were occupied. Now that was one at a time and the time taken up doing that was phenomenal - I should have been teaching, I hadn't taught them anything. I satisfied my curiosity and I discovered which children hadn't a clue and which ones knew it - but I knew that to begin with. So, I had got a whole - a very accurate - tick list of exactly which children knew what - but of very little use really because I could have written the tick list that would actually have put those which are at Level 1 and those that weren't. I couldn't have said that Tommy would have known nine positions but wasn't sure of 'below', or that Ellen knew nine positions but stumbled on 'behind' - because we were doing which was 'before, 'behind, 'above' and 'below'. I could not have done it to that level of accuracy - now the assessment did it to that but I don't think I need it to that."

3.20 Commentary

We think that the teachers have been trying hard to prepare for the national curriculum, and have been helped in the new forms of planning required of them, by the use of the programmes of study and, more often the attainment targets, in the statutory orders. The implementation of the curriculum in classrooms has been partly successful, but hampered by problems of class management in the sense that the teachers see it as necessary that they cater in a more differentiated way for individuals, and include fuller coverage of curriculum content. To cope with this teachers adopted more child-centred organisational strategies and also reduced the frequency with which they heard children read, but this created unnerving professional dilemmas for them. It should be a matter of concern that the implementation of the national curriculum is being

effected at the cost of hearing children read as frequently as teachers believe is necessary. The issue here is not whether hearing children read every day is necessary or not. That is a matter of dispute. The issue is that teachers who believed it was necessary were not able to do it. On the whole the assessment and recording has been frenetic, time-consuming, considered ineffectual, and not served the teachers' purposes well. The reasons for this are primarily lack of a clear policy on assessment/recording and the amount of evidence needed, from the central government, rather than lack of interest or commitment or effort by the teachers.

Levels and sources of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction and morale

3.21 There was considerable variation in attitudes to teaching as a job. and in the extent of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with teaching post-ERA. But such variation did not seem to be the case when they were talking about morale, which was universally (24:0:0) perceived to be poor. The two concepts - job satisfaction and morale - overlap, but they had different meanings for our teachers. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction related to aspects of the work that gave them pleasure or frustration, while morale referred to a general, and often collective and future-oriented, feeling about being a member of the primary teaching profession.

3.22 On the issues of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, a general picture emerges and it is one that we expressed concern about in our pilot study, **1330 Days**. There we said that teaching as a job of work was changing, in ways that teachers would find less satisfying; there was more time in meetings, In-service training and Preparation, and relatively, as a proportion of the time spent on work overall, less time in contact with children. Insofar as we were assuming that teachers drew their main source of satisfactions from their interaction with children in the classroom, we were correct. In this study, the overwhelming source of satisfaction, often expressed as a kind of compensation for the dissatisfactions currently experienced, was the contact with children, and the pleasure at being in their presence and watching them progress. Grace had a reception class of over 30 pupils:

"I love the contact with the children; I feel - but you might laugh at me, it sounds a bit old-fashioned really - I feel quite honoured to be able to work with children, you know, I've got the pleasure of them - they are always different and it doesn't matter if they annoy you, they do horrible things and there are badly behaved ones, but it's like contact with the human condition really - it's something that you can really enjoy, it's never boring - you can't complain about it being boring! I just love it, I've always enjoyed it.

"And that's not been diminished by the other pressures?

"No - I do sometimes feel that I get very irritable and I'm het-up, you know, when I get home it takes me a long time to wind down - my husband will tell you that I'm very ratty sometimes."

Ursula was also a reception teacher:

"The children, really - I just enjoy being with the children and educating them. I like to see children get on - you never develop a child's full potential, I know that from my own son, but I like to push the children. Some people think I push too hard but I think if they have the ability they should use it, and that, I suppose, is what gives me my 'kicks', so to say. I mean, you see children who couldn't read starting to read, and that is just marvellous."

Penny too, had a reception class:

"As I said, watching them improve. It's the reading and writing. Oh, I love it. I always encourage them to write and, in the afternoon when they are playing games, playing different things, they very often play 'offices', so we have an office set up and they'll write me letters and they'll bring them over and I'll add a little bit, while I'm doing something else, on to theirs, and they'll go back and they'll write me another thing, and I love these letters, these things that they're ..., and then this is what I'll spend time on, very often at home, then I'll come home and take them all home and I make a book. Make a book for each month of all the emerging writing for each month and put it up and then, when it's parents' night, they can look back. We're always

making books and things, it's sticking them in in a nice way and decorating them. It takes ages but I like doing it".

Patrick, Year 1, also referred to the pleasure in seeing progress:

> "It never fails to amaze me as when you see them growing up into second year infants and at the same time you have got these new ones coming - and the difference is that they have never left their mums, they have never talked to any of the ..., you ask them to line up in 'girls' and 'boys' and they don't ... You forget how far back they are and then you see them progress in confidence and independence and ... "I can read", "I can count", and you know. Then they perform for the Christmas play because we, at least all of them, we don't select a few - they all went on the stage and did "The Twelve Days of Christmas" - even the little ones - a tiny little boy who can't climb up the steps, can't climb up the boxes in PE, but even he performed. You still get that. I still, despite all this, I've got a little girl at the moment who is thumping other children and when you tell her off she curls into a shell. She reacts like this to all adults - and yet she's really trying hard to please at other times. It's how you get round this personality problem that she's obviously got - and she's a bright child. Now these pre-occupy me - this is what the challenge is about, and I have what I call my 'red group'. Jim, who is extremely disadvantaged, from a very difficult home, Linda who has - we've had the children all through the school and they have all had a bad start, they have all come in poor - now, if I can make that step in Reception they are going to be more able to benefit. If we miss out now then she's going to be held back, but now she is actually making progress. These are the children, that's the reward I get. It's with the children, and forget about ticking boxes ... it is just something I have to do. You won't take that away, there's nothing - I mean, if I really feel depressed then you just go by yourself, and get among the children in the classroom - you can't stay depressed long, they soon get you out of it."

3.23 The following extract is from a teacher who had decided not to let the national curriculum rule her life. In expressing her satisfactions in teaching she also lists, as a sort of preface, the sources of dissatisfaction, and her determination to limit the new demands upon her to what she considered reasonable:

"Yes, yes. Oh it is, because I like it - I like teaching but I would like to be left alone to get on with it. I would like to get to grips with my children in my room without having interruptions, without having endless meetings, without having to cluster with other schools, without all this nonsense about assessment. I would like to get on and teach and I feel, at the moment, a lot of energy and time is taken away from the classroom.

"Do you feel this has increased stress?

"Yes. Oh yes, I made quite a deliberate decision two years ago that I was not going to get into a fuss over all of this, that my job was to teach the children to read and to do numbers and to write, and that was what I was going to do and leave the rest, but I was not going to lose sleep over it. It was one year, three years back now, when all of this really came to a head, and I'm not a person to get colds or is unwell, but I had 'flu for the first time ever in my life and I had one cold after another, and terrible headaches, and all sorts of things, and I found that each holiday I was trying to get better to go back to school, and I thought, "This is just ridiculous", so I made a conscious act that I was not going to do that. I enjoy teaching, I like children and I sorted out in my own mind what I felt my job was. I do that but then I feel that I also have a life outside school and that, if I feel like sitting and knitting in the evening, then that is what I would do. You have got to have a break, you can't work 24 hours a day, you have got to have a rest, you have got to have a break so that you are fresh to go back; that is what I try to do. But I do love the job - I am nice with children and I do like little children. It's a lovely job, it is never boring, it's always different, the kids are smashing and, you know, I wouldn't exchange jobs - I like it. But I would like to be allowed to get on with it."

These views of the sources of dissatisfaction accorded with most others. The meetings, the administrative chores, together with the perceived lack of recognition of their work and skills, were what the teachers disliked about the changes in their work.

3.24 A sense of low morale pervaded most (22:1:1) of the interviews, whether the teachers were talking about themselves, their colleagues in school, or the public

perception of primary teaching as a job generally. The following extract is at one extreme. It is the view of Angie, a teacher who had decided to get out of teaching:

> "My commitment to the job (as you have probably read between the lines) has deteriorated, it really has. I just think, "I am not going to kill myself, it is not worth it".
>
> "How do you feel about being a teacher?
>
> "I don't feel happy about it any more at all. I feel people think it's a piece of cake, all those holidays, that sort of attitude. The man next door said to me, "Where are you working now?" and I said, "Oh, I am working in a nursery", and he responded, "Oh, that's easy"! That's the sort of attitude - the younger they are the easier it is. People just don't have any idea.
>
> "So would you say it is the advent of the national curriculum that has had this effect on your morale and your job satisfaction?
>
> "I don't think it's just that - I think it's the way it is affecting schools and I am sure the Head that I have, she is very nice and I am sure that, five years ago, I would have been very happy there. There seems to be this pressure on schools to prove that they can do the national curriculum and that they are the best. They are going to be better than anybody else. They get together with other Heads of local schools - we have meetings with other schools - and it's all this competitive element that they are trying to put on the children as well -it's all competition now. And the teachers are even doing it, they are competing against each other. My Head just expects so much work to be produced, and this is all over the week-end, and every member of our staff is saying, "I dread 6 o'clock Sunday". I thought, "<u>You dread 6 o'clock Sunday</u> - I am spending <u>most</u> of Sunday working", - I am spending <u>most</u> of Sunday working."

3.25 Dislike of many of the new demands had permeated Angie s view of teaching. A similar antipathy showed itself in Jane's view, despite her general approval for the national curriculum itself:

> "Yes, I think the national curriculum has improved things because, when I first came back into teaching, and with infants obviously you concentrated a lot on Language work and basic

number work and Maths work, that, certainly the Physics side of Science, you wouldn't be doing very much at all. So, yes, it has made it more interesting, if exhausting.

Do you resent the extra workload?

"I do now, very much, and every year as it gets worse I resent it more.

"Yes. I mean, how much do you resent it? Have you ever thought of leaving the profession?

"Yes.

"Seriously?

"Yes. My great thing, when it was 1990 I said, "This will be the decade in which I retire". I am forty-five now and I really can't see me keeping up this pace of work for more than another five or six years. I just don't think I could physically cope with it - because I always used to be tired during the holidays, you know, the first couple of days you are a bit tired, aren't you? - but now it takes two or three weeks - I mean, Christmas, I was really, really tired.

"You don't envisage it getting any better? You don't think, "Well, it's because it's new"?

"No. I think the next couple of years will be even worse. I mean, this trial run will probably be quite nasty, won't it, and then I think they will do the odd bit of tinkering with it and the next year will probably be equally horrendous. No, I can't see it improving in the near future for me at all.

"Yes. Before the Education Reform Act, before the national curriculum, would you have seriously thought, "Oh, God, I'm going to be retiring soon"?

"No, I was quite happy really. I just didn't contemplate doing any other job, but I have to say that I am consciously looking in the papers now to see what else there is that I would like to do, because I feel so drained as a human being I know that I can't go on at this pace indefinitely."

For Jane, looking forward to the blessed release into retirement was marred only by a fear that her daughter might end up a teacher:

"It isn't an isolated thing - I haven't found an infant teacher for years who has said that a wonderful job teaching is - and the final, depressing thought for me last Christmas was when my youngest daughter said she might consider teaching, and I have done everything I possibly can to persuade her not to because I wouldn't wish this job on anybody. I mean, I am a daughter of a teacher, loads of my family are teachers, and I think perhaps it's something that we are quite good at, but certainly as it is now I will do all I possibly can to prevent her becoming a teacher because I think it is a soul-destroying, exhausting job at the moment."

3.26 The consequences of this dip in both job satisfaction and morale is somewhat different from what we predicted in **1330 Days**. It is not leading to withdrawal from teaching as a job, perhaps because most of our teachers were still committed to the work of class teaching, or had no alternative. But there is a significant minority (11:5:8) of our teachers who indicated that although they were staying in teaching, they had lowered their career aspirations. They no longer had ambitions to be promoted to positions of managerial responsibility, such as deputy head or headteacher. Denise's view was typical of this group. She currently held an Incentive 'A' Allowance:

"One other thing, has the Education Reform Act, and so on, affected any kind of career horizons that you may have?

"Yes.

"Has it increased or reduced them?

"Reduced them yes, it's reduced them. I - you will laugh again - in 1982 my mum died and I thought, "Oh, she has died very young", and it made me realise that you haven't got a lot of life really, it does not go on endlessly and that I should really try, and I started to try, for some Deputy Headships. I looked around different schools and applied for two or three and had a couple of interviews, and I just feel grateful now that I didn't get the jobs. I think, having seen how hard our Deputy Head works (she is divorced and she puts a lot of time into the school and she is really superb) I just don't know that my family life would have been secure. You seem to have got to know such a lot of people and go on so many courses - and nowadays I find that a little bit

frightening, whether it's because I am a little bit older, I don't know - but people go away for week-ends. I suppose they always have done, but there is such a lot that you have got to be knowledgeable about, and you have always got to be there, and you can't lessen your pace, the pressure is more intense upon you because you have always got to be seen to be doing it and doing it well. People look up to you and they need guidance from them a lot more than people did from the Deputy or Head in the past. So, I've dropped that completely, I can do without the hassle, I feel. I will leave it to people that want to be career people and perhaps haven't got other commitments."

Equally, Ellen, a deputy, regretted the fact that she had been promoted to her present job:

"I am very unsettled at the moment - do you want me to talk like this, about me personally? I am very unsettled. There was a job that came up before Christmas, I am not saying that I would have got the job but it was a job not teaching, to do with education but not teaching, and I seriously thought of applying for it. It meant working about twenty miles away and I spoke to the people concerned, husband, friends and the Head, and she said, "It would be a shame because if you went it would be a loss to education", but she said, "In the end you have to make your own mind up". And, I don't know, in the end I didn't apply - I can't think there was one reason, maybe just a lot of reasons, but I wish I had now because my job is getting more and more frustrating.

"Thinking about what you have been saying - the dominant image I have got of you is of 'frustration'?

"Yes, and I find that now I have been Head since Christmas, Acting Head rather, since Christmas, you are thinking - you have to think like a Head, don't you? - and on Friday, yesterday, the chap came from the office about our LMS and he said we would probably have to lose another teacher, and I think, "How do we cope, how are we going to cope?" - and I am asking, we are asking, everybody to do all these things and we are constantly cutting, you know - and I think, "Is it worth it, is it worth it really, because I could be earning more and worrying less?"

"Yes.

"Your commitment goes, doesn't it?"

3.27 It was not only the more senior teachers who saw morale as damagingly low. The following extract is from an interview with Sheila, a young teacher, under 25 years of age, whose interview was heavy with disillusionment:

> "At times, extremely negative. I do feel it's almost got to the point where people say, "What do you do?", and you think, "I don't want to tell them because we've got a very negative public image", and you just think it doesn't have the kind of status it used to have - you are definitely not regarded as highly as I thought teachers were when I went into the profession. At times I do think I'd like to try something else and quite seriously I thought, "Right, I'll have a go at something else, I'm going to do something else", because I just come home feeling stressed. I've got friends doing nice jobs during the day and coming home and having nothing to do in the evenings and at the week-ends, and they get paid more than I do. I left university with a big group of friends and every one of them, without exception, is earning more than I am now. They work hard but they don't do the same number of hours that I do, so I feel that quite hard to deal with. I've got the same training, the same amount of education, why shouldn't I be regarded as highly as they are? So, I suppose from when I first started thinking it would be wonderful to be a teacher, I don't think that so much any more. I still do it because I enjoy being with the children and basically I like the job, but the actual morale of being a teacher and the status is not there at all. So, for me, teaching has never been stable, it's always been a massive change. Maybe in a few years it will be a bit more settled. - I wouldn't like to say, the way things are changing so rapidly. Who knows, we just carry on, don't we?"

3.28 At an earlier stage in the interview this young teacher provided a sequence of dialogue that captures the combination of lack of satisfaction, frustration, and lowered motivation that characterised most of our teachers' views. It is difficult to escape the overwhelming sense of her bitterness and disillusionment, explicitly attributed to the implementation of the Education Reform Act. The extended sequence is provided to illustrate the debilitating way the feelings were combined in her mind:

"Right. Can we go on to talk about the topics of morale, commitment and job satisfaction. Would you say that your job satisfaction is greater or less than it was before the Education Reform Act and the national curriculum?

"A lot less, because I feel I'm not getting the time actually with the children, which was why I went into teaching. I enjoyed being with children, I got a lot of satisfaction from talking to them, seeing them progressing in little ways like that, and now I feel that my time with them is so pressured that I tend to get very stressed and ratty with the children through no fault of their own, because I feel these pressures to achieve so much in each session, whereas, before, you didn't have that. If a child started off doing an activity with you and it branched off to something completely different, that was fine and that was rewarding, and you really got to know the children, but there is just not time for that now. I found myself quite often saying, "Yes, yes, very nice but let's carry on with this", and I hate it, I find that so wrong. So that is the major thing which has decreased my job satisfaction really.

"What about your morale and the morale of your colleagues, has that altered over the past two years?

"Yes, definitely. I've been at the school - I'm just beginning my third year - when I started in this school I was a probationer and the feeling has slowly gone more and more downhill - there's much more going into each other's classes, not so much for a chat of how the day went but of how awful everything is and how on earth can we get it all done. Just generally, a very negative feeling which wasn't there when I first started. I think I feel that way too - I mean, obviously, I started very enthusiastic and very committed, but more often now I'm finding myself frustrated, fed-up and just thinking, "What's the point?" So, yes, There's been a significant change since it all started.

"Do you feel that your commitment has altered?

"No, I'm just doing more and more work because I'm committed to those children and I feel that, to

give them what they deserve then, for me, that means more and more work - so you just keep on doing it because your commitment is to the children initially.

"Is there anything in particular about the Education Reform Act that you could pinpoint as affecting morale or job satisfaction and commitment?

"Personally, the lack of consultation. I feel it's all being done without me saying anything, and I find that insulting because I'm a teacher. I'm at the sharp end of it and I'm not being asked what I think, and, "Will this work or will this not work?" We're just being told to get on with it, do it, and that has been the thing which has really annoyed me the most I think, and really made me feel, "Why should I do it?", sort of thing - it's made me feel a bit anti, really."

3.29 Commentary

There is little doubt that our teachers continued to derive immense professional and emotional satisfaction from their relationship with the children in their classes. This aspect of their work, for most of them the reason why they became infant teachers, remains the most salient part of the job. But most saw the context in which they carry out their teaching as damagingly altered by the 1988 Act; they now work with a corrosive and debilitating sense of low morale, frustration, and unattractive lengthy administrative burdens. We consider that this is worrying, though not necessarily for the retention of teachers in the profession. (Only one planned to leave teaching, though several had considered doing so). However, the promotion of experienced teachers into senior positions, such as deputy headship and headship is likely to be affected, with adverse consequences for the leadership of schools. Furthermore, and most worrying of all in our view, these class teachers perceived that the vigour, enthusiasm and liveliness which they had previously brought to their work was being damaged. It is difficult to think of anything else that can damage the quality of learning for very young children more than to have demoralised, tired and disaffected teachers. Our teachers were struggling to ensure that they did not reach this stage, and they had not yet done so, but the evidence in our interviews is compelling. The rot has started.

Working conditions

3.30 We asked our teachers how far their implementation of the national curriculum was being helped or hindered by their conditions of work, by which we meant the time available to them, class-size, physical facilities and resources, and the levels of support from their colleagues. We also asked them to identify what one improvement in their working conditions would be the greatest help to them in delivering the national curriculum.

3.31 There was no doubt about the teacher's answer; time in the school day was too short to meet what was being asked of them. It dominated their working days, as we have already illustrated in Paragraph 2.14, by referring to the Running Commentary syndrome. This was sometimes explicitly identified as "lack of time", sometimes as "another pair of hands in the classroom", and sometimes as "a smaller class so that I can get round them all to assess them", and the general picture supports the evidence in **1330 Days**, where lack of time in the school day was identified as the major obstacle to the implementation of the national curriculum. Denise had 31 Year 1 pupils:

> "The first and over-riding thing is that the classes are too big at 31 children, it's too big, and I am reminded of that very strongly every year because the way our school is organised. At the moment the reception classes take some children in in September but keep some who are not able, or are thought not mature enough, to move up and that means, in September, I only have 20 in my class. Then, after Christmas, I get another 10 from the reception class when they have another intake, and the difference in my class from September to Christmas, and from Christmas onwards, is absolutely incredible. I've got time for the children from September to Christmas, I can get to know them really well, we can progress really well, those children get a super start but, as soon as the other 10 or 11, as it is, come in, then things have to go and I have to make compromises that I don't like making.
>
> "Can you give an example of the compromising?
>
> "Well, I used to have time to chat to the children, you know, and get to know them really well and, if they have got something to tell me or something in their writing to talk about, I had time to listen and discuss it and to perhaps put the child on to the next stage, to take it on a

bit, to make it understand something, I had got time to show it something. But now I have to say, "I'm sorry, I haven't got time, I have somebody else to see to", and that doesn't seem fair for the child."

3.32 When we asked teachers what they thought was a manageable class size for delivering the national curriculum they settled on a figure of about 24/25 pupils. This is smaller than the figure provided by the Audit Commission, which proposed 30 as the maximum class size, but is surprisingly close to the statistically generated 25-pupil threshold we identified in **1330 Days**.

3.33 Where time had been found, for example by the LEA providing extra staff or by the headteacher taking the whole school for hymn practice, story, or assembly, it was valued and used for critical review and planning, according to Ann:

"There has been provision since September for a Year meeting for half-an-hour once a week. Now, I find that invaluable.

"What's invaluable about it?

"First of all we can have a good moan! And also we can discuss day-to-day problems which it's not always possible to do in staff meetings, for example. And then we do discuss how we have planned our forecasts, which we do in loose conjunction at the beginning of the year, and how they are going. Any particular ideas which either of us have had that we can share, and I enjoy them. Last year I worked with a really good and excellent colleague and I think, really, that I learned more in that year on how to teach than anything else."

3.34 However, many teachers reported that the small units of time freed up by not going to assembly, were inadequate and often taken up with demands for immediate support or unplanned needs. They never seemed to stop for Patrick:

"We have two short assemblies per week where the Head takes the children. That is usual but, if anything comes up, they are quickly dropped - but it is two fifteen minute sessions, but I usually find in that time that another teacher will come along and ask if they can use the computers, or

> Mathematics, or we are doing something to the hall, or we are doing something for the resource area - so, although it's non-contact time with the children, I'm usually very busy with somebody else. One of the teachers who is in charge of the music has hymn practice on a Monday morning for about twenty minutes or so, so that's another one. But, there again, I'm often called out by another teacher, usually the top infant teacher at the moment, to help there - so that is my non-contact time. With two assemblies, two short ones on Tuesday morning and Friday afternoon, and the one a Monday morning, the one when the teacher takes this hymn practice, and that's it."

In addition, the virtual absence of formally allocated non-contact time was widely (23:0:1) deplored.

3.35 The teachers did not see learning resources as generally a problem, and many of them reported that their LEAs had gone out of their way to ensure that the schools were better resourced than previously, especially in respect of resources for the learning of Science and Technology. A slightly surprising finding was that some teachers reported that their classrooms were too small, now, because the national curriculum had created the need for more space, especially in respect of group work, investigative methods in Science and Technology, and in respect of the storing of portfolios of children's work for assessment purposes.

3.36 In Mary's school however, the physical facilities were simply inadequate:

> "The only other thing which gets me is the state of the buildings. I mean, I work in a terrapin and we have no water in the block so, you know, all these wonderful Science projects we are supposed to be doing we have to go with buckets down to the hall, and that involves walking over the next classroom's fire steps, which you wouldn't do when you have buckets of water to carry. In the winter, of course, it's impossible so we have to stop the timetable when we have snow because as soon as you come out of the classroom you're in the snow, it's not as if you're covered. Every time they want to go to the toilet they have to go right round the school. Our terrapins are being removed, they have virtually re-built them, the roof in the school everywhere leaks - I think I am the only classroom which hasn't got bowls and things. The classrooms are freezing so it never gets to the right temperature. Where we are going

to do the PE I don't know, our hall has glass down to the floor so we cannot do it there - we have posts that hold the roof up! The PE adviser came in last year and said, "You should not be doing PE here", but where else can we do it? We have tiles missing off the floor which have been missing since Christmas, and there are no plans to replace."

3.37 There were substantial differences in the extent to which the teachers saw themselves as well- or badly-supported by their colleagues. Those teachers, like Patrick, who worked collaboratively reported a corporate sense of solidarity built up by teamwork, through which some of the stress and anxiety was being reduced:

"Well, we work very well together, we are all good friends - I mean, people who come to us from other schools, their first thought as they walk in is, "What a happy place". It is, we do all get on well together, it is a happy school - people who come to us on teaching practice or from other schools all note this, they all say straight away, "It's a lovely atmosphere", and it is. Everybody works well together.

"Do you find that that is actually a help in facing some of the stresses?

"Oh, yes, yes, because you sort of help each other, like I've been helping the lady who is the teacher of the top infants. I mean, we have worked together these last two days on this assessment and she and I have been going though a series of meetings on assessment, and I have been going purely as a back-up for her, support, moral support for her if you like. We are due to go to a meeting next week for a whole day and I'm going along. Really it was supposed to be the Head the top infant teacher, but I'm going along as well as moral support. So, yes, we do support each other very well, we do get on well and our views are very similar on all of this."

3.38 This was especially true in schools where headteachers had developed more collegial styles of working in advance, or in anticipation, of the national curriculum. There were, however, some examples of teachers feeling that they had been left to cope on their own, that neither their head nor most of their colleagues cared about the difficulties being encountered by them. They were left to sink or swim. Brenda was a Year 2 teacher in this position:

"How does the rest of the school view the assessment and record keeping? I mean, you're the year that is doing it, how do the rest of the school view it?

"It's a very touchy subject really because they seem to think that it's all for Year 2 to do, and yet we have been told, and we try to get the message back to them, that it's supposed to be a whole school approach and not just for the burden of Year 2 teachers."

3.39 Worse still, some teachers were suffering as the result of what they saw as the headteacher taking a too laissez-faire attitude. Helen, for example, compared her previous and current heads:

"Under the previous Head I didn't measure it in terms of hours, in the context of this kind of research - I was never so tired because it was productive work. OK, we would have a management meeting that didn't finish until 5.30 or 5.45pm. but you know you had moved the school on another day in its life. We have meetings now and I have actually had to say when we start the meetings at 4, "I want a 5 o'clock finish" - it's not my part to say this but we must put a 5 o'clock finish on it because he can't draw a meeting to a conclusion - he can't start a meeting, neither can he conclude it - but if we say we need to go at 5 he actually does get his thoughts together a bit quicker and we usually finish by ten past or a quarter past five - and that's OK. He's hoping that it will all go away, that's how he seems to act, and it's so frustrating, unbelievably frustrating. I mean, I spent the first year trying to do his job as well as mine and nearly made myself ill - I just could not believe that he was just not doing things and I went to speak to the deputy, who worked under the previous head as well. He couldn't handle it and his way of not handling it was just to tell me to stop moaning. You know, thank you for your professional support! And so I realised after that that I would have to find my own way of coping, and I don't think that I do cope very well, I cope very badly with the situation at times. I try and focus on my class but other things impinge.

"I understand assessment is your responsibility, so you are trying to promote this?

"That's right, but I am also working totally without a job description - nobody in this school has a job description and I am ...

> "Are you responsible for assessment throughout the entire school?

"Yes, and I have tried and tried to get the Head to give me a job description and to discuss with me what he thinks we, as a school, should be doing as regards assessment and I cannot get anything out of him. Because he has no thoughts about what he wants to see happening in the school, he has got no kind of educational vision or educational philosophy so we have got nothing in place, no educational policy in place, nothing in place, not for anything, absolutely nothing."

3.40 Commentary

The teachers perceived there to be a substantial mismatch between the statutory obligations that they as teachers were required to meet, and the working conditions within which they were expected to meet them. The most obvious mismatch is in respect of the time available in the school day, including non-contact time, and where it occurred, shortage of space and physical facilities. But, for a substantial minority, the hidden dimension of the lack of support from colleagues and headteachers was equally a great difficulty. Defining the national curriculum as a task for one or two teachers, rather than as a responsibility of the school staff as a whole, is both short-termism, since all staff ultimately will have to be involved, and adds substantially to the stress of those currently more involved than others. The responsibility for ameliorating the working conditions of teachers now rests mainly with the LEAs and the governing bodies, and without firm commitment to improve staffing levels in primary schools it is difficult to see the implementation of the national curriculum over the next few years as anything other than patchy, despite the best efforts of the teachers. Where a school staff is not working collaboratively and supportively as a team the position will be even more difficult.

Teachers' personal lives

3.41 Teachers exist as human beings with personal lives outside their work as teachers; they have friends,

partners, families. Although we had not planned to examine the relationship between work and personal life, the issue emerged very clearly in our interviews and we have decided to report it in its own right.

3.42 There were two kinds of teacher in our interviews in this respect, we call them the "Over-conscientious" and the "Sane". The first type, and the great majority (21), the "over-conscientious" had, to a greater extent than they thought sensible, allowed the demands of work to intrude upon, and take over, much of their personal life. Felicity is an example:

> "I think it shows more in the home than in school because you just seem to carry on in school. I take it out more on my home than the children in school - you are really ratty at home. You spend far too much time doing school work, and it's the first time my children have said anything is in the last year. My daughter is in the fourth year at the comprehensive school - at one time I thought she may have gone into teaching but we have completely put her off. We haven't said, "Don't go into it", she has just seen us when we come home."

So is Denise:

> "Yes, I think so - I drink more! I laughed at somebody on television - was it the Minister? - when he said something like he wasn't aware that teachers were being driven to drink, or something like that. I definitely drink - I don't drink a lot, don't get me wrong, but sometime you think, "Why should it take me two or three days to wind down in my holidays, I'll drink myself silly on the first night and that's it, do it all in one fell swoop!"

Ann saw stress as bi-furcated:

> "You have referred quite a lot throughout the interview to stress occurring, without my prompting it. Where does stress show itself? Is it in relationships with your colleagues or is it at home, or is it somewhere else? How does it show itself? Or are you able to cut yourself off from stress?

"No, no. On this shoulder it's like a grey cloud of the national curriculum and, on this one, it's school management - it depends on what has

happened on which shoulder it is. I really, honestly, can't say how stress manifests itself apart from there is a lot more of going home, throwing the bags down and having two stiff gin and tonics. It's like an insidious thing - you didn't wake up one morning and it was just there, it has been piling up at a rate of knots so you really never feel that you have come to the end, and that is not entirely due to the national curriculum - that can be other things in the school, but it is difficult to divorce the two."

Rose had stopped reading novels:

"I've given up far more of my own free time. I've got - I'll show you afterwards if you like - in my study at the back of the house there, I used to have a shelf where I'd put the latest books that I'd bought and hadn't read yet, because I have got shelves and bookcases all around the room. I used to put them on a single shelf ready to read them. I'd say, on average, I'd buy no more than two a week over the year, about 100 a year, maybe less. I've now got a bookcase and a table full of books waiting to be read. At the last count there were a hundred and eighty four. Now I used to love ... - one or two a week was no strain to me, it was a good way of unwinding, like watching TV as well, and going out, we keep a horse to go out and ride, looking after the garden or what have you. It's just so many of those things gone out of the window because you'll come in at the end of the working day and feel shattered. You haven't even got the energy to read, and that's a terrible thing to say, or if you do you think, "I should be looking at the latest HMI reports on the state of reading in the country.""

Jane was too tired to relate to her family:

"The job doesn't suffer but the rest of my life does, and then I resent it very much, like being wiped out the first week of the Christmas holidays. I was just too tired to do anything, and I think it's very bad for my family."

While Brenda's personal life had vanished:

"At the moment I would say that I don't have any personal life here in the week at all - I don't have any time for a personal life at all. I find

that the work I am having to do is so draining that I come home and I am really not fit for anything else most of the time."

3.43 Part of the explanation, of course, for this problem is that the teachers simply feel that they have too much to do - the unmanageable workload referred to earlier. But the other explanation is the personal sense of obligation to their own professional standards and the needs of the children. In order to do their work to the standards they set themselves, teachers simply have to lose time from their personal life. For example, Jane, who works in a small rural school with a mixed-age class, explained that although she had too heavy a workload, she did not see it as causing her stress since she herself created part of the workload by her own conscientiousness:

"No, it hasn't been the reason for any extra stress. No, I think that most of my pressures really are self-imposed in that I don't like to half do the job - I can't bear to do something badly, I think that's my personality. You know, if I am going to do something I want to do it properly. I like doing all our displays and things - I get, "Why do you spend so long doing it, can't you just stick them on the wall?" But I work a lot from the wall, I use it very much as information and display. I mean, our buildings are old, Victorian, and not too wonderful to work in really, and not designed brilliantly for children - like outside loos - and they look pretty horrid when there is nothing up but they are transformed with a bit of the children's work. They take such a pride in their work and they comment, you know, if they come after the holiday and I haven't even put the backing paper on the wall, they will say, "Isn't it awful", and they can look back after two or three weeks and say , "That looks wonderful now", you know. And it's not just the appearance of it, you know, it's a lot of care, and a lot of effort and a lot of hard work has produced it. Unfortunately, it's hard work on my part as well as theirs!"

3.44 The effect on her ability to rest and sleep was also reported to us by Brenda, a Year 2 teacher:

"Tiredness, irritability, waking up at night thinking, "I have not done that", or, "I must put that up", or, "I must talk about that" - not being able to get back to sleep again because of it. Constantly your mind is buzzing over things and,

> because I am unsure about whether I am doing it right, I feel ..., you know, you think to yourself, "Well, why have they put this on us - it's not right, you shouldn't have to go through all this". It's a sort of dilemma, you think, "It can't be right, they must be able to review it this year, they have got to see". But they're going to tell parents that that's it, not that it's a pilot. Have you heard?"

Grace had taken to turning her hobby, playing the piano, into a therapy:

> "It depends very much on the state of term. I mean, if it's towards the end of term I would think, "I can't spend another day like this, I am glad the holidays are here", and we try to go away most holidays, just to get away from it because, if I am at home, I have all my stuff in that room at the back there and I just keep going and looking in. I cannot get it out of mind. I suppose I cope by just trying to get things organised a little bit better and thinking things out basically. School is never out of my mind any more; in fact, I am glad I do music because I can sit down in there and I can tell myself, "Yes, I am still working because I am playing now". That relaxes me, and I do go swimming once a week - I make sure that I go and take physical exercise. But it is difficult to cope with - there are times when it gets me down and there are times when I think I could give it up to-morrow - but then I would miss the children terribly, and there are times I think I am doing a jolly good job."

Betty described the punishing effect on her evenings:

> "I go home and go to sleep after school. I'm shattered. I make my children's tea, then I have a snooze, and then I set to on school work again."

3.45 Something of the ambivalence about the impact on their personal life is caught by Nina:

> "I keep saying to myself, "I must start doing these recording sheets this week", but this week never comes. I think that sooner or later I am going to spend one week-end doing it. Blow family life, no, I must do something about it - it's me I know, it's putting off the evil day. I know I

have got to do it and I have reports to write as well this year, and I dread to think what will happen next term as far as the children are concerned, because I wonder how much teaching will be done when you have all this other thing hanging over you.

"Has it affected the time you spend with your family, or do you not let it encroach?

"I try not to let it encroach. Sunday is a funny day anyway. My husband's a vicar so he is out mornings and I am out. The children don't go out to church any more and he is always out in the evening. I don't go any more. I don't remember spending all Sunday afternoon on preparation two or three years ago, and I am having to now. No family time - if we get Saturday together we are very lucky."

3.46 Almost all our teachers are women, and for many of them there was a clash with what they saw as their domestic responsibilities. Olive, who herself had no children, perceived the problems that the workload posed for the over-conscientious women with children:

"I think it is just workload that everybody, whatever their position, is saying. I must say that I love my job but the hours I am putting in, I think, are totally unrealistic and I shouldn't have to do it - but I put it in because I think I must do a good job on this and I must do a good job on that, but I think they are totally unrealistic hours and I couldn't do it if I had children. No way could I have children and then, say, go back to a job that I am currently doing - I couldn't do it - and that's only going to be bad, particularly for women, and the effect is that men will get all the top positions. Whilst that isn't a hobbyhorse of mine, that is going to be one of the effects, that women with young children will not be able to hold down deputy head and headship positions. And that's with a very, very understanding husband - I have not done any shopping for three weeks because he has done it all - he has had to."

3.47 The level of conscientiousness about their work was reinforced by the poor staffing levels in primary schools. If teachers were away through illness, they felt guilty because their colleagues' workload would be thereby increased. Rose referred to working even when unwell:

"I don't take any more time off - I've dragged myself in this week when I could barely speak because people weren't there. I've never like to be off, I still feel as if I'm at school myself, I have to have another teacher if I'm not in, and people are never less than charming, they always ask after your health when you go back, and you know they've had some of your children at the same time. I went in yesterday and one colleague had had an overflow from somewhere else, and another person had done an extra turn of duty, or what have you, and I said, "Look, I'm taking storytime now for mine and somebody else can put theirs in with me as well", and they said, "Oh, you can hardly speak", I said, "Well, I'm doing it for the children, I'll do it for you". I think in a funny way you become more committed, you become more committed to your colleagues, it's like the Blitz spirit or the Battle of Britain."

3.48 Tricia, with nursery and reception children, had responsibility for the infants' section in her school and showed how the extra workload had spilled over into her relationships with her family, supportive as it was:

"We find it very difficult to recruit the right sort of people, so I suppose that's another worry that's affected short-temperedness - long staff meetings, that type of thing, taking it out on your family - that's where the stress comes out with me. Endless phone calls to ask, "What are you doing?", "How are you doing that?", "You're not going on another course, are you?" Obviously there's family stress, there are problems in any family; I have a very supportive family who are as ambitious and as keen for me to get on as I am for myself - I know that's not the case in some families."

3.49 Nonetheless, later in the interview Tricia accepted that part of the problem was her own conscientiousness. Although she needed non-contact time, there were some pretty strict conditions to be met before she would be prepared to take it:

"Even though I have talked about non-contact time, I don't want non-contact time unless the person in my class is me, or a clone of me, or someone who is going to be able to go in there and carry on or do something which will enhance those children who are learning for half-an-hour a day or one day a

week, or whatever, I don't want someone going in there just doing a holding job, because then, suppose somebody was to say , "You can have one day off a week to do record keeping, to do administration work, that sort of thing, go on courses". I mean, unless I could really be sure that that person in my class for that one day was doing meaningful things, carrying on and continuing with the National Curriculum and bringing something to these children, I would rather do it in my own time at home if I had to, because then I'd cram five days into four."

3.50 Grace, talking about the impact of accountability, said that it was less influential than her own internal sense of professional standards:

"It is not as if you feel there is some 'big brother' watching you, watching what you do. Maybe I am just the sort of person who feels it's there and I should be doing it, and if I am not doing it I punish myself because I think I should be doing it.

"Because it's statutory, something that is required?

"No, I feel that if I am doing my job properly I should do it - I suppose it's a professional way of looking at it. I want to do my job properly and be considered a good teacher, and therefore I must cover all these things and do them properly."

3.51 Again, as Vivienne said,

"The teachers will make it (the national curriculum) work regardless of their own health and their families who are suffering perhaps in the doing of it, but we could have done with more time and more support."

This was echoed by Denise:

"If you are a teacher and you really enjoy teaching I don't think that has changed, I certainly love my job. In fact, I wasn't very well last week and I had two days off, and my husband was saying that he doesn't think our Head appreciates really that sometimes you do put work first in spite of having a family and not feeling well yourself. You think, "Oh, I have got to get

in, I've got to struggle there and be there", because you do feel an intense commitment to your job, and it must be because you enjoy it. It is no good doing teaching if you don't enjoy it, is it? - I think it must be hell, it must be awful."

3.52 The second category of teachers we called 'the Sane'. These are teachers who had decided to limit their impulse to over-conscientiousness. They **were** conscientious about their work, but they were also anxious to protect their own time, their "sanity", and their personal and family life. They are a minority (three out of our 24). For Angie, the consequences for her professional relationships were not good:

"I feel the national curriculum is causing stress, yes, definitely - well, it is for many. I can see it in other teachers as well - I find that I go to the Staff Room at lunch time - we have lunch from 12 noon to 1.15.pm. and 10 minutes either end of that is meant for classroom preparation - but nine times out of ten I will go to the Staff Room for my lunch and, at 12.20pm. say, there is still hardly anyone up there, and at 12.50pm. teachers are rushing to have their lunch to go out again at 1.05pm. to go and get their class set up for the afternoon. That has really amazed me, that the school that I am at is basically only surviving because they have got a lot of workaholics and they are there hours after school. At first I felt pressurised to keep up with this and then, after Christmas, I decided, "Right, I am going home at 4.30pm. every day, I am not staying to 5.30pm. I am going to have a lunch and I am going to be up there at 12.20pm. every day and I am having a proper break or else otherwise, if I don't, I am going to go under". I had to make those rules for myself regardless of what others were doing. I know that it doesn't go down well. And if I don't feel well I am not going into school. I have decided that there are certain rules that I have got to stick to because I don't think the Government are going to thank me for giving up my lunch hour or staying on after school. I feel that the school that I am at, most of the teachers are either young probationary teachers or teachers who are climbing up the ladder and see themselves as little notches on the way. I don't really feel like that at all, I just want to be a good class teacher and be happy in my job. I don't feel that that is what's happening with me at the moment."

3.53 The other two teachers felt that they had made sensible coping strategies, even if they did not always do all that they were asked to do. Both estimated that they worked between 40 and 50 hours a week, some ten hours less than almost everyone else. Christine discussed her strategy as follows:

> "But does it, because of the pressure of the time in your school day, mean that you can cope with everything that you are asked to do or is it the case that you have to say to yourself, "Well, I can't do that"?
>
> "Yes, I frequently have to say, "No, I can't do that", especially when other members of staff want my time for something, something that they are doing, I just haven't got the time. The Headteacher doesn't get everything she wants either - if she asks me I say, "Yes, I'll try", and if she comes back a couple of weeks later and I have to say, "Sorry, I haven't had any time".
>
> "How do you feel about that?
>
> "I would like to have more time to help other members of the staff but I think, when it comes down to it, your own class has to come first. You have to do your best for your own class, you can't take your time out to do things for other people in school if you haven't done what you should do for your own class. We are all experienced teachers, we haven't got any probationary teachers, so I don't feel that much of an obligation to do things for other members of staff.
>
> "Our old head was quite relaxed about management - in fact she used to complain if she had to go to a Shire Hall meeting - she didn't go to a lot of them. Things used to be filed in the bin, you know, all this paper, whereas our present head takes it all very seriously and dishes it all out."

Christine had established a cool, no-nonsense approach to the new demands. If they took longer than people were expecting them to take, then people would have to put up with it:

> "I still find it a very satisfying job, yes, Oh, yes. Well, I can see that I can still teach the way I want to regardless of the national curriculum - in fact, I won't allow the national curriculum to change me that much. I always feel

that you have to move forward, make progress with new ideas and so, but I like to take the best of what's new and add to it what I have already got rather than going overboard for a new idea. And I think the national curriculum is much the same, you know - we will be able to assimilate most of it and, hopefully, not make it too burdensome in the future. So, yes, I am very satisfied with the job - nothing would induce me to leave teaching and if they don't like the way I teach they will have to sack me, and that would be that."

3.54 And she had taken the same view of meetings and in-service training and paperwork:

> "Don't you have to spend more time in meetings and things like that?

"We did, but we have cut it down a lot - we just say, "No, we are not going", and that's it. Yes, we were much more depressed a year or eighteen months ago - we couldn't see our way out of it, but I think we can now and we are not bothered about it.

> "And am I right then in thinking that there's not much about the job you would describe as stressful, you wouldn't describe yourself as experiencing stress, therefore, or would you?

"I think not now, really - I think I have got it under control. There was a time when I felt that there was just too much and I couldn't get it organised, but I've re-organised my room recently - well, about 18 months ago - and made a lot more room for the paper. My table now, where it used to be covered with children's work, is really nothing to do with the children any more - it is surrounded by files and bits and pieces - that's my office and that's me."

3.55 Likewise, with assessment and recording, she had decided not to do things prematurely:

> "Are you not assessing differently from the way in which you assessed before?

"Well, yes, I suppose I am but I don't find that it gives a different result, you know, I only find that it comes to what I thought in the first place.

"Would it be wrong - I'm trying to capture what it is that you are saying - is it true that you would be, to some extent, going through the motions then in the business of assessment itself?

"Yes, definitely.

"Because you have got a very clear notion of where .....?

"Well, also I am waiting to see what happens because we are getting new directives all of the time, and I have come to the conclusion that one ... well, the only way to cope with it, I suppose, is not to do anything until you absolutely have to, because next week it will all change and you will have done it for nothing. So I carry on with what I am doing until I absolutely have to do something about all this paper that's landed on me, and then I, well, I give it lip service, change my ways a bit, perhaps fill in what it asks for, and carry on in a slightly different way - and I will only change slowly, I don't think changing rapidly does anybody any good - you only find you are doing the wrong thing or something that is worse than what you were doing already. If I am to change I want it to be better."

Christine added that the assessment, as SEAC had suggested, was being trialled and that was how she intended to treat it, "Otherwise you'd go crazy, and what good are you to the children if you're crazy?"

3.56 Commentary

The successful implementation of the national curriculum and assessment within the existing time scale is predicated on the assumption that teachers will take on workloads that they themselves see as damaging to their personal life and, for some, to their relationships with their families. There are three dimensions to the explanation of this phenomenon. Part of the explanation lies in the pervasive sense of conscientiousness in the occupational culture of primary schools. Part of the explanation is also that there is simply too much for the teachers to do. Part, too, is the confusion and uncertainty about what is required for assessment purposes. We think that a driving sense of conscientiousness, an oppressive set of demands, and a policy vacuum is a destructive combination which should not be allowed to become a permanent feature of teachers' working culture. The

minority of teachers, who have decided to restrict their responses to the demands, seem more likely to be able to go to the theatre, concerts, to read a novel or to engage in other leisure pursuits in the frame of mind where they can enjoy them. The others, and their families, seem doomed to experience the invasion of what should be their private worlds, by work, anxiety and guilt about work - what one teacher described to us as "the Sunday night blues, every evening of the week".

4. POLICY ISSUES RAISED BY THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

We have identified ten policy issues arising from our findings and present them here, in brief outline only, in order to stimulate further discussion on them, both in AMMA itself and elsewhere.

4.1 Reasonable Workloads

The concept of what constitutes a "reasonable" workload for primary school class teachers is problematic. Our teachers were experiencing what **they** saw as unreasonable workloads. This was especially, but not exclusively, true of Year 2 teachers. The objective data provide a picture of a typical working week of around 54 hours, with Year 2 teachers working around 58 hours. Five Year 2 teachers were working 68 hours a week on average. The time spent on work has increased since the same time last year, and looks set to increase further as new subjects are statutorily introduced. We think that the advisability of taking up a test case on this issue might be explored by AMMA.

4.2 Pressure on Teachers' Time within the School Day and the Staffing of Primary Schools

The pressure the teachers were under within the school day was creating a sense of working hard but achieving little - what we called the "Running Commentary" Syndrome. Their experience was simply that they did not have time in the school day to do all the things which had to be done in the school day. We do not think that teachers can sustain this sort of pressure for very long, nor should they be expected to do so.

They have a right to working conditions that enable them to do their job well. The problem is long-standing and the solution has been recognised since at least 1986, when the House of Commons' Education, Science and Arts Committee's third report argued that primary schools could not be expected to make further improvement in standards unless they were staffed in ways that provided class teachers with some time in the school day away from their classes. As we have shown in our report, "non-contact time", where it was available, is often snatched at the expense of other activities, such as assembly. But it is used for "other contact", with colleagues in joint planning and review or for working more intensively with small groups of children. We think that those responsible for policy-making on staffing levels in primary schools need to give further attention, urgently, to this issue or quality and standards in learning will continue to be adversely affected. In this they would be helped by the adoption of activity-led staffing models rather than pupil/teacher ratios.

4.3 Assessment and Recording

We have shown that teachers perceived a policy vacuum or, at best, policy confusion in respect of assessment and recording. We believe that, in Spring 1991, their situation was akin to what the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, called "anomie" - a state in which clear expectations for behaviour were absent. This helps explain the unduly complex, time-consuming and often purposeless assessment and recording activities we found, and the fact that Year 2 teachers were spending over 8.9 hours a week on marking and recording. We think that normal expectations for recording and assessment need to be clarified. This might take the form of non-statutory guidance about what might reasonably be expected about frequency of observation of pupils, frequency of recording, numbers of pieces of pupils' work needed for a portfolio, etc., rather than DES guestimates about the hours needed for recording. There have been recent proposals to extend the SAT period (from Timothy Eggar) and to rely exclusively on Teacher Assessment (from the NUT). If our analysis is correct, both proposals would lead to increased, not reduced, workloads since under them, without guidelines of the kind we suggest, teachers' conscientiousness would drive them to further excessive, frenetic assessment and recording, only over longer time-frames. If such guidance is not made available, we think school staff, with the support of governing bodies, should create their own, bearing in mind the excessive workloads we have identified arising from practice in Spring 1991.

4.4 The Management of Teachers' Time

The underlying model of teachers' time in Key Stage 1 is mismatched with the empirical reality of their lives. The teacher workforce is almost entirely female and most have heavy domestic responsibilities. Whether or not the domestic arrangements should be as they are is a separate but important social issue to be solved in the long term. However, such domestic responsibilities are a fact of these teachers' existence. A model of time derived from business, commerce or industry, in which the underlying assumptions are that work has a prior claim to teachers' time, both at school and at home, simply ignores the current realities. We think that the device of dividing teachers' time into directed (accounted for) and non-directed (unaccounted for and unmeasured) time has created intolerable tensions for conscientious teachers. Whilst we acknowledge the difficulties in setting ceilings for a semi-profession, the expected relationship or ratio between directed and non-directed time might be re-examined so as to indicate to teachers, and especially to heads, what could reasonably be required. The evidence we provide - that in the period concerned the ratio of directed to non-directed time was nearly 3:2 - might provide a starting point for discussion. We do not think that exhortations to teachers to engage in better "time management" is anything other than a rhetoric in which the victims of unreasonable time demands are blamed for them. A particularly heavy and difficult responsibility is laid on heads in respect of Year 2 teachers. Heads need to develop collegial management styles so as to share the pressures of Teacher Assessment through the school, rather than target them on Year 2 teachers.

4.5 Class Size and Class Management

The teachers had classes ranging from those with 20 pupils to those with 35 pupils in them. There may be good reasons for such variation but, nonetheless, they mean that different conditions under which the national curriculum and assessment are being implemented do not obviously bear direct comparison. We generated a statistical threshold from our pilot study of about 25 pupils, beyond which teachers' perceptions were that class size became the most serious obstacle to delivering the curriculum. This figure was confirmed to us in our interviews. The Audit Commission has arrived at a threshold of about 30 pupils. Whilst we

accept that class size is a crude measure - it ignores the age range and the existence of support teachers, assistants, etc. - we think that schools should develop a policy on class size that takes account of the demands of the national curriculum and assessment. Moreover, central and local government policy-making on teacher supply needs to take account of the large proportion (1 in 5) of primary classes over 30 pupils. To restrict the analysis to data on pupil-teacher ratio ignores the realities of large classes since the pupil/teacher ratio has only an indirect relationship to class size.

We were concerned that, to implement national curriculum and assessment, the teachers were adopting class management strategies in which they did not believe, and which they thought would lead to lower standards. The two strategies - increasing pupil independence in matters of classroom routines while setting "low input" tasks, and hearing children read less frequently than they thought desirable - were designed to free-up teachers' time in classrooms to engage in detailed observation and recording of groups and individuals. We do not know whether the teachers' views that these strategies, whilst freeing-up their time, would, nonetheless, lead to lower standards, especially in Reading, will be supported from future evidence, but the teachers' perceptions need to be taken very seriously. If the only way that very experienced infant teachers can deliver the core curriculum and assess it is by setting most pupils low-level tasks to keep them busy and by hearing them read less frequently than previously, the cost of the core curriculum and assessment might be high. The findings in the SEAC evaluation of the pilot SATs were congruent with the views of our teachers. When, over 1991-1993, the other foundation subjects come in, teachers will be put under even greater pressure to adopt such strategies for class management.

4.6 The Subversion of Formative Assessment

The main purpose of assessment, according to the TGAT report, was "formative" - to help teachers identify children's achievements and to plan the next steps in their learning. Our interviews with teachers lead us to believe that the formative purpose has been largely excluded from their thinking about assessment, which was dominated by concerns to achieve a "summative" purpose, ie. to allocate pupils to levels so as to provide a basis for comparison between pupils, classes and schools. This has happened partly, of course, because of the time when we were conducting the research and

because Spring term Teacher Assessment has to serve a summative purpose, following the decision that most attainment targets would not be assessed by SATs. In addition, there has been an "end-of-Key-Stage-drift" in assessment and recording because the statutory arrangements are largely concerned with this period. There needs to be an attempt to reclaim the formative purpose of assessment and to redress the balance of assessment activities so that they are spread across the whole of the Key Stage. The advantages would be that the burdens of Year 2 teachers would be lightened and that teachers would not feel that an approach to assessment, which they found attractive and worthwhile, had been discredited.

4.7 Primary Teaching as Work

Our evidence shows the fundamental shift in the balance of work, with working time away from contact with pupils occupying about 60% of the teachers' overall time. Much of this time is invisible to the public and needs to be brought out into the domain of public understanding, if the '9-3' image of infant teaching is to be destroyed. However, compared to time spent in contact with children, much of the other time on work was experienced as unrewarding, to put it kindly. LEAs and headteachers need urgently to develop ways of using teachers' time, in INSET and in meetings, that are efficient and productive. If this does not happen, the opportunities for teachers' professional development, provided by INSET and by other kinds of meetings, will be lost.

4.8 Teacher Retention and Promotion

In **1330 Days** we argued that the fundamental shift, outlined in Paragraph 4.7 above, would lead to teachers leaving the profession. The reason we advanced was that the parts of the job that teachers found attractive and satisfying - contact with children - comprised, relative to other parts, a small proportion of time. We did not find from our interviews that this argument was supported but we did find that almost all the teachers had lowered their personal ambitions. They no longer saw promotion to deputy head and head as attractive because of the legal, moral and administrative responsibilities attached to the posts. If this view is widespread in the profession as a whole, two consequences follow. First, there is a time bomb in the supply of high quality leadership in infant schools and departments because it will become even

more difficult than at present to fill headships and deputy headships. Secondly, where these are filled, it will often be by people who do not see working with children as the most satisfying part of their work. We are not sure that this will be a benefit to schools.

4.9 The Use of Non-teaching Assistants

We found that over five hours a week of the teachers' time were spent on relatively low-level administration and welfare activities, such as registration and dinner money collection, moving children round the school, supervision at the beginning and the end of sessions, and mounting displays and assemblies. It has to be asked, and under LMS no doubt will be asked, whether this is a good use of graduate time, especially since one of the major problems for teachers is shortage of time within the school day. We acknowledge that this time is well spent in social, emotional, personal development activities but it could equally well be done by non-teaching assistants more cheaply. We do not know whether this is a practical option since many of these activities are short time spaces of 3-9 minutes spread across the day, but we think it is an option that should be explored.

4.10 The Education Reform Act and the Trap of Conscientiousness

Personal commitment, "conscientiousness", rather than salary position, was associated with long hours on work. We originally used the term "conscientiousness" to imply the possibility of "over-conscientiousness", ie., conscientiousness to a fault. We think that many teachers in Key Stage 1 were having to, or choosing to, spend so much time on work in the Spring term, 1991 that the virtue of their conscientiousness must be called into question. They saw it as damaging their personal lives, their health and, ironically, the quality of their pupils' learning and relationships with them. Conscientiousness had become, in a literal sense, counter-productive. We do not think that this state of affairs is intentional but it should be brought to a halt.

All the parties involved in primary education have a role to play here. Teachers need not be so conscientious, though this will be difficult because of their training into an occupational culture in which a high value is placed on being conscientious. But, if

the demands on time are actually absurd, conscientious teachers need not simultaneously take all of them seriously. Teacher associations will need to support teachers here. Headteachers have a role in both resisting outside pressure to do everything at once, (1990-1991 was a trial year for assessment and recording, not the real thing), and in not making more demands upon teachers than are necessary. Records in five different formats, for example, or in daily checklists, or in Records of Achievement format, are not statutorily required. LEAs and governing bodies should examine their staffing formulae, using activity-led models to find ways of improving staffing levels. Central Government might wish to take into account the experience of these teachers so far and consider the implications for its reforms over the next few years as further subjects come into statutory orders, and this affects Key Stage 2. The teachers supported the reforms and had achieved much in attempting to make them work. But we do not think they will be able to sustain permanently the heavy workloads and high levels of stress that they see as necessary to make the reforms work. It is difficult for us to envisage the full national curriculum (as opposed to the core curriculum currently in place) and assessment being effectively delivered if the working conditions of these teachers are not improved. By far the most pressing improvement in conditions is **time in the school day**, and the most obvious way of securing that improvement is to press for staffing levels in primary schools to be increased. Without such improvement the reforms are unlikely to succeed.